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BOMBAY BRANCH

OF THE

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

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THE

EMPIRE OF THE CZAR;

OR,

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND RELIGIOUS STATE AND PROSPECTS OF RUSSIA,

MADE DURING A JOURNEY THROUGH THAT EMPIRE.

BY

8506

THE MARQUIS DE CUSTINE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

" Respectez surtout les étrangers, de quelque qualité, de quelque rang qu'ils soient ; et si vous n'êtes pas à même de les combler de présents, prodiguez-leur au moins des marques de bienveillance, puisque de la manière dont ils sont traités dans un pays dépend le bien et le mal qu'ils en disent en retournant dans le leur."

Extrait des Conseils de Vladimir Monomaque à ses Enfants en 11..
Histoire de l'Empire de Russie, par KARAMSIN, t. xi. p. 2[illegible]

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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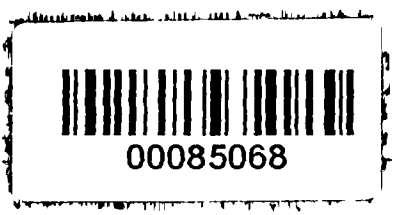

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THE

EMPIRE OF THE CZAR.

CHAPTER XV.

FÊTE OF PETERHOFF. — THE PEOPLE IN THE PALACE OF THEIR MASTER. — IMMENSE POWER OF THE EMPEROR. — THE EMPRESS CATHERINE'S MOTIVES FOR INSTITUTING SCHOOLS. — VIEWS OF THE PRESENT EMPEROR. — RUSSIAN HOSPITALITY. — FOREIGNERS' DESCRIPTIONS OF RUSSIA. — THE AUTHOR'S MOTIVES IN WRITING HIS TRAVELS. — NO MIDDLE CLASS IN RUSSIA. — THE CHILDREN OF THE PRIESTS. — CAPITAL PUNISHMENTS. — ABJECT MISERY OF THE PEOPLE. — RULES FOR FOREIGNERS WHO WOULD SEEK POPULARITY IN RUSSIA. — PROBITY OF THE PEASANTS. — PICK-POCKETS IN THE PALACE. — THE JOURNAL DES DÉBATS. — THE SITE OF PETERHOFF. — THE PARK ILLUMINATIONS. — A CITIZEN BIVOUAC. — THE ENGLISH PALACE. — SILENCE OF THE CROWD. — THE BALL. — GOOD ORDER OF THE PEASANTS. — ACCIDENT IN THE GULF. — EVIL OMENS. — THE EMPRESS'S MODE OF LIFE. — DESCRIPTION OF THE ILLUMINATIONS. — REVIEW OF THE CORPS OF CADETS. — A CADET IN FAVOUR. — THE CIRCASSIAN GUARD.

It is necessary to view the fête of Peterhoff under two different lights, the material, and the moral; thus viewed, the same spectacle produces very different impressions.

I have never seen any thing more beautiful to contemplate, yet at the same time more saddening to reflect upon, than this pretended national reunion

of courtiers and peasants, who mingle together in the same saloons without any interchange of real sympathy. In a social point of view the sight has displeased me, because it seems to me that the emperor, by this false display of popularity, abases the great without exalting the humble. All men are equal before God, and the Russians' God is the emperor. This supreme governor is so raised above earth, that he sees no difference between the serf and the lord. From the height, in which his sublimity dwells, the little distinctions which divide mankind escape his divine inspection, just as the irregularities which appear on the surface of the globe vanish before an inhabitant of the sun.

When the emperor opens his palace to the privileged peasants and the chosen burghers whom he admits twice a year to the honour of paying their court*, he does not say to the labourer or the tradesman, "You are a man like myself," but he says to the great lord, "You are a slave like them, and I, your God, soar equally above you all." Such is (all political fiction aside) the moral meaning of the fête: it is this which, in my opinion, spoils it. As a spectator, I remarked that it pleased the sovereign and the serfs, much more than the professed courtiers.

To seek to become a popular idol by reducing all others to a level, is a cruel game, an amusement of despotism, which might dazzle the men of an earlier century, but which cannot deceive any people arrived at the age of experience and reflection.

* On the 1st of January, at Petersburg, and at Peterhoff, on the birthday of the Empress.

The Emperor Nicholas did not devise this imposition; and such being the case, it would be the more worthy of him to abolish it. Yet it must be owned, that nothing is abolished in Russia without peril. The people who want the guarantees of law, are protected only by those of custom. An obstinate attachment to usages, which are upheld by insurrection and poison, is one of the bases of the constitution, and the periodical death of sovereigns proves to the Russians that this *constitution* knows how to make itself respected. The equilibrium of such a machine is to me a deep and painful mystery.

In point of magnificent decorations, and of picturesque assemblage of the costumes of all ranks, the fête at Peterhoff cannot be too highly extolled. Nothing that I had read, or that had been related to me concerning it, gave me any adequate idea of this fairy scene; the imagination was surpassed by the reality.

The reader must picture to himself a palace built upon a terrace, the height of which seems that of a mountain in a land of plains extending farther than the eye can reach: a country so flat that, from an elevation of sixty feet, the vision may sweep over an immense horizon. At the foot of this imposing structure lies a vast park, which terminates only with the sea, on whose bosom may be descried a line of vessels of war, which were illuminated on the evening of the fête. This illumination was general; the fire blazed and extended, like a conflagration, from the groves and terraces of the palace to the waves of the Gulf of Finland. In the park, the lamps produced the effect of day-light. The trees

were lighted up by suns of every colour. It was not by thousands nor tens of thousands, but by hundreds of thousands, that the lights in these gardens of Armida might be counted; and they could all be seen from the windows of a palace crowded with a people as profoundly respectful as if they had lived all their days at court.

Nevertheless, in this assemblage, the object of which was to efface all distinctions of rank, each class might still be separately traced. Whatever attacks despotism may have made upon the aristocracy, there are yet castes in Russia. Here is presented one more point of resemblance to the East, and not one of the least striking contradictions of social order created by the manners of the people operating in unison with the government of the country. Thus, at this fête of the empress, this true bacchanalian revel of absolute power, I recognised the order which reigns throughout the state, through the apparent disorder of the ball. Those whom I met were always either merchants, soldiers, labourers, or courtiers, and each class was distinguished by its costume. A dress which would not denote the rank of the man, and a man whose only worth should arise from his personal merit, would be considered as anomalies, as European inventions, imported by restless innovators and imprudent travellers. It must never be forgotten that we are here on the confines of Asia: a Russian in a frock coat in his own country appears to me like a foreigner.

True bearded Russians think as I do upon this subject, and they comfort themselves with the idea that a day shall come when they will be able to put

to the sword all these coxcombical infidels to ancient usages, who neglect the nation, and betray their country, in order to rival the civilisation of the foreigner.

Russia is placed upon the limits of two continents. It is not in the nature of that which is European to amalgamate perfectly with that which is Asiatic. The Muscovite community has been governed hitherto only by submitting to the violence and incoherence attendant upon the contact of two civilisations, entirely different in character. This presents to the traveller a field of interesting, if not consolatory, speculation.

The ball was a rout: it professed to be a masquerade, for the men wore a small piece of silk called a Venetian mantle, which floated in a ridiculous manner above their uniforms. The saloons of the old palace, filled with people, resembled an ocean of heads of greasy hair, over all of which rose proudly the noble head of the Emperor, whose stature, voice, and will, alike soar above his people. This prince seems worthy and capable of subjugating the minds of men, even as he surpasses their persons. A sort of mysterious influence attaches to his presence; at Peterhoff, on the parade, in war, and in every moment of his life, may be seen in him the power that reigns.

This perpetual reigning, and its perpetual worship, would be a real comedy, if upon such permanent dramatic representation there did not depend the existence of sixty millions of men, who live only because the man whom you see before you playing the part of the emperor, gives them permission to

breathe, and dictates to them the mode of using this permission. It is the divine right, applied to the mechanism of social life. Such is the serious side of the representation, wherein are involved incidents of so grave a nature, that fear soon extinguishes the inclination to laughter.

There does not exist on the earth at the present time, not in Turkey, not even in China, a single man who enjoys and exercises such power as the emperor. Let the reader figure to himself all the skilfulness of our governments, perfected as they are by centuries of practice, put into exercise in a still young and uncivilised society; the rubrics of the administrations of the West, aiding by modern experience the despotism of the East; European discipline supporting the tyranny of Asia; the police employed in concealing barbarism, in order, not to destroy, but to perpetuate it; disciplined brute force and the tactics of European armies, serving to strengthen an Eastern policy;—let him conceive the idea of a half-savage people who have been enrolled and drilled, without having been civilised, and he will be able to understand the social and moral state of the Russian nation. To [illegible] by the progressive discoveries in the art of governing made by the European nations, in order to rule sixty millions of Orientals, has been from the time of Peter the First the problem to be studied by those who govern Russia.

The reigns of Catharine the Great and of Alexander did but prolong the systematic infancy* of this nation, which still exists only in name.

* L'enfance systématique.

Catharine had instituted schools to please the French philosophers, whose praises her vanity desired to obtain. The governor of Moscow, one of her old favourites, who was rewarded by a pompous exile in the ancient capital of the empire, wrote to her one day that no one would send their children to the school. The Empress replied pretty nearly in these words: —

"My dear Prince, do not distress yourself because the Russians have no desire for knowledge: if I institute schools it is not for ourselves, but for Europe, in whose estimation we must maintain our standing; but if our peasants should really wish to become enlightened, neither you nor I could continue in our places."

This letter has been read by a person in whose statements I have every confidence. Undoubtedly, in writing it, the Empress forgot herself; and it is precisely because she was subject to such absence of mind that she was considered so amiable, and that she exercised so much power over the minds of men of imagination.

The Russians will, according to their usual tactics, deny the authenticity of the anecdote; but if I cannot be certain of the strict accuracy of the words, I can affirm that they truly express the sentiments of the sovereign. In this trait may be discovered the spirit of vanity which rules over and torments the Russians, and which perverts, even in its source, the power established over them.

Their unfortunate desire for the good opinion of Europe is a phantom which pursues them in the secrecy of thought, and reduces conversation among

them to a trick of jugglery, executed more or less adroitly.

The present emperor has, with his sound judgment and his clear apprehension, perceived the shoal, but will he be able to avoid it? More than the strength of Peter the Great is necessary to remedy the evil caused by that first corrupter of the Russians.

At the present time, the difficulty is of a double character; the mind of the peasant remains rude and barbarous, while his habits and his disposition cause him to submit to restraint. At the same time the false refinement of the nobles contravenes the national character, upon which all attempt to ennoble the people can alone be built. What a complication! Who will unloose this modern gordian knot?

I admire the Emperor Nicholas. A man of genius can alone accomplish the task he has imposed upon himself; he has seen the evil, he has formed an idea of the remedy, and he is endeavouring to apply it.

But can one reign suffice to eradicate evils which were implanted a century and a half ago? The mischief is so deeply rooted, that it strikes even the eye of strangers the least attentive, and that too in a country where every one conspires to deceive the traveller.

In travelling in Russia, a light and superficial mind may feed itself with illusions; but whoever has his eyes open, and adds to some little power of observation an independent humour, will be presented with a continued and painful labour, which consists in discovering and discerning, at every point, the struggle between two nations carried on in one community. These two nations are — Russia as she is,

and Russia as they would have her to appear in the eyes of Europe.

The Emperor is less secure than any one against the snares of illusion. The reader will remember the journey of Catherine to Cherson; she traversed deserts, but they built her lines of villages at every half league of the road by which she passed, and as she did not go behind the scenes of this theatre on which the tyrant played the fool, she believed her southern provinces were well-peopled, though they continued cursed with a sterility which was owing to the oppression of her government rather than to the rigour of nature. The finesse of the men charged by the Emperor with the details of Russian administration, still exposes the sovereign to similar deceptions.

The corps diplomatique, and the western people in general, have always been considered by this Byzantine government and by Russia in general, as malignant and jealous spies. There is this similarity between the Russians and the Chinese, that both one and the other always believe that strangers envy them: they judge us by their own sentiments.

The Russian hospitality also, vaunted as it is, has become an art which may be resolved into a refined species of policy. It consists in rendering its guests content at the least possible cost of sincerity. Here, politeness is only the art of reciprocally disguising the double fear that each experiences and inspires. I hear every where spoken the language of philosophy, and every where I see that oppression is the order of the day. They say to me,—"We would gladly dispense with being arbitrary, we should then be more rich and powerful; but we have to do with

an Asiatic people:" at the same time they think in their hearts, "we would gladly dispense with talking liberalism and philanthropy, we should then be more happy and more strong, but we have to do with the governments of Europe."

The Russians of all classes conspire with an unanimity which is extraordinary in causing duplicity to triumph among themselves. They have a dexterity in lying, a natural proneness to deceit, which is revolting. Things that I admire elsewhere, I hate here, because I find them too dearly paid for; order, patience, calmness, elegance, respectfulness, the natural and moral relations which ought to exist between those who conceive and those who execute, in short, all that gives a worth and a charm to well-organised societies, all that gives a meaning and an object to political institutions, is lost and confounded here in one single sentiment — that of fear. In Russia, fear replaces, that is, paralyses thought. This sentiment when it reigns alone can never produce more than the appearances of civilisation; whatever short-sighted legislators may say, fear will never be the moving influence of a well organised society; it is not order, it is the veil of chaos; where liberty is wanting, there soul and truth must be wanting also. Russia is a body without life, a colossus which subsists only by its head; and whose members, all equally deprived of force, languish! Thence arises a profound inquietude, an inexpressible uneasiness, an uneasiness which does not, like that of the new French *révolutionnaires*, arise from a vagueness of ideas, from abuses, from the satiety of material prosperity, or the jealousies which a combination of

agencies gives birth to, it is the expression of a real state of suffering, the indication of an organic malady.

I believe that in no part of the world do the men enjoy less real happiness than in Russia. We are not happy among ourselves, but we feel that happiness is in our power: among the Russians it is unattainable. Imagine republican passions (for, once again, fictitious equality reigns under a Russian emperor) boiling under the silence of despotism! This is a terrific combination, especially as viewed with regard to its future influence upon the world. Russia is a cauldron of boiling water, well closed, but placed over a fire which is ever becoming more fiercely heated; I dread the explosion, and the Emperor has several times experienced the same dread during the course of his laborious reign; laborious in peace as in war, for, in our days, empires, like machines, are ruined by remaining inactive.

It is, then, this head without a body, this sovereign without a nation, who gives popular fêtes! It appears to me that before creating popularity he should create a people.

In sooth this country lends itself marvellously to every species of fraud: there are slaves elsewhere, but to find a nation of courtly slaves it is necessary to visit Russia. One scarcely knows at which most to wonder, the inconsistency or the hypocrisy. Catharine II. is not dead, for notwithstanding the open character of her grandson, it is still by dissimulation that Russia is governed. Here, to avow the tyranny would be to make a beneficial progress.

On this point, as on many others, the foreigners who have described Russia have combined with the

natives to deceive the world. Could any persons be more treacherously complaisant than the greater part of those writers who congregate here from all the corners of Europe, in order to excite a sensibility on the touching familiarity which reigns between the Russian emperor and his people? Are, then, the illusions of despotism so strong as to overpower even the simple spectator? Either this country has not hitherto been described except by men whose position or character does not permit of their being independent, or else minds the most sincere lose their liberty of judgment as soon as they enter Russia.

As regards myself, I oppose to this influence the aversion which I have for disguise.

I hate but one evil, and if I hate it, it is because I believe that it engenders and includes all the others: this evil is falsehood. I therefore endeavour to unmask it wherever I meet with it; it is the horror with which it inspires me that gives me the desire and the courage to write these travels: I undertook them through curiosity, I relate them from a sense of duty. A passion for truth is an inspiration which supplies the place of energy, youth, and enlightened views. This sentiment influences me to such an extent as to cause me to love even the age in which we live: for though it be somewhat coarse, it is, at least, more sincere than that which preceded it. It distinguishes itself by the repugnance, sometimes rude and unmannerly, which it evinces for all affectations. In this repugnance I partake. A hatred for hypocrisy is the torch which serves to guide me through the labyrinth of the world: those who deceive men, whatever means they

may use, seem to me as poisoners; and the more elevated and powerful they are, the more are they culpable.

Such are the sentiments which prevented my enjoying, yesterday, a spectacle which, notwithstanding, my eyes admired. It was beautiful, magnificent, singular, novel — but it appeared deceptive: this idea sufficed to deprive it of all real splendour. The passion for truth, which in the present day pervades the hearts of Frenchmen, is still unknown in Russia.

After all, what is this crowd, whose respectful familiarity in presence of its sovereign has been so much extolled in Europe? Do not deceive yourselves: these are the slaves of slaves. The great lords send to the fête of the empress chosen peasants, who, it is pretended, arrive by chance. This *élite* of the serfs is joined by the most respectable and best known tradespeople, for it is necessary to have a few men with beards to satisfy the old-fashioned Russians. Such is, in reality, the people whose excellent disposition has been held up as an example to other people by the sovereigns of Russia from the time of the Empress Elizabeth. It is, I believe, from her reign that this kind of fête dates. At present the Emperor Nicholas, notwithstanding his iron character, his admirable rectitude of intention, and the authority with which his public and private virtues invest him, could not perhaps abolish the usage. It is therefore true that, even under governments the most absolute in appearance, circumstances are stronger than men.

Nothing is so perilous for a man, however elevated

his position may be, than to say to a nation "You have been deceived, and I will be no longer accessory to your error." The vulgar cling to falsehood, even to that which injures them, rather than to truth, because human pride prefers that which comes from man to that which comes from God. This is true under all governments, but doubly so under despotism.

An independence like that of the *mugics* * of Peterhoff can alarm nobody. It forms the liberty and equality which despots love! It may be boasted of without risk; but advise Russia to a gradual emancipation, and you will soon see what is said of you in the country.

I, yesterday, heard the courtiers as they passed near me boasting of the politeness of their serfs, "I should like to see such a fête in France," they said. I was strongly tempted to answer them: "In order to compare our two people, we must wait until yours exists."

I called to mind at the same time a fête which I once gave to the lower orders at Seville. It was under the despotism of Ferdinand VII., but the true politeness of those Spaniards, free *de facto*, if not *de jure*, furnished me with an object of comparison little favourable to the Russians.†

Russia is a book, the table of whose contents is magnificent, but beware of going further. If you turn over the leaves you will find no performance answering to the promise: all the chapters are headed, but all have to be filled up. How many of

* Russian peasants.

† See "Spain under Ferdinand VII."

the Russian forests are only marshes, where you will never cut a faggot! How many distant regiments are there without men, and cities and roads which exist only in project! The nation itself is as yet nothing more than a puff placarded upon Europe, dupe of a diplomatic fiction. I have found here no real life except that of the emperor's; no constitution except that of the court.

The tradespeople who ought to form a middle class are too few in number to possess any influence in the state; besides, they are almost all foreigners. The authors amount to one or two in each generation: the artists are like the authors, their scarcity causes them to be esteemed; but though this favours their personal prospects, it is injurious to their social influence. There are no legal pleaders in a country where there is no justice: where, then, is to be found that middle class which constitutes the strength of other states, and without which the people is only a flock, guided by a few well-trained watch-dogs? I have not mentioned another class of men who are not to be reckoned either among the great or the little. These are the sons of the priests, who almost all become subaltern *employés*—the commissioners and deputies who are the plagues of Russia. They form a species of obscure noblesse, very hostile to the great nobles; a noblesse whose spirit is anti-aristocratic in the true political signification of the word, and who at the same time are very burdensome to the serfs. These are the men (inconvenient to the state, and fruits of the schism which permits the priest to marry) who will commence the approaching revolution of Russia.

The punishment of death does not exist in this land, except for the crime of high treason; but there are certain criminals whom they nevertheless kill. The way in which they reconcile the mildness of the code with the traditional ferocity of manners is this: when a criminal is condemned to more than a hundred strokes of the knout, the executioner, who understands the meaning of such a sentence, kills him through humanity, by striking him at the third blow on a mortal part. And yet the punishment of death is abolished! To making the law thus lie, the proclamation of the most audacious tyranny would be preferable.

If it is thought that I judge Russia too severely, I must plead the involuntary impression that I receive each day from persons and from things, and which every friend of humanity would receive in my place, if like me, he endeavoured to look beyond that which would be shown him.

This empire, immense as it is, is no more than a prison, of which the emperor keeps the key. Nothing can exceed the misery of the subjects unless it be that of the prince. The life of the gaoler has always appeared to me so similar to that of the prisoner, that I am astonished at the mental illusion which makes the one believe himself so much less to be pitied than the other.

Man here knows neither the real social enjoyments of cultivated minds, nor the absolute and animal liberty of the savage, nor yet the independence of action of the half-savage — the barbarian; I can see no compensation for the misery of being born under this system, except the dreams of vanity and the

love of command; on these passions I stumble every time I return to the endeavour of analysing the moral life of the inhabitants of Russia. Russia thinks and lives as a soldier! A soldier, to whatever country he may belong, is scarcely a citizen; and here less than any where can he be called one; he is rather a prisoner for life, condemned to look after other prisoners.

It should be observed that the word prison signifies something more here than it does elsewhere. When one thinks on all the subterranean cruelties concealed from our pity by the discipline of silence, in a land where every man performs an apprenticeship to discretion, it makes one tremble. He who would conceive a hatred for reserve should come here. Every little check in conversation, every change of expression, every inflexion of voice, teaches me the danger of confidence and candour.

The very appearance of the houses brings to my mind the unhappy condition of human existence in this land.

If I cross the threshold of the palace of some great nobleman, and see there a disgusting and ill-disguised uncleanliness reigning amidst an ostentatious display of luxury; if I, so to speak, inhale vermin, even under the roof of opulence, — my mind will not stop at that which is presented merely by the senses; it wanders further, and sees all the filth and corruption which must poison the dungeons of a country where even the rich do not shrink from loathsome contact. When I suffer from the dampness of my chamber, I think of the unfortunate beings exposed to that of the sub-marine dungeons of Kronstadt, the fortress

of Petersburg, and of many other subterranes of which I forget even the name. The ghastly visages of the soldiers whom I meet in the streets remind me of the plunder of those employed in provisioning the army. The fraud of these traitors, paid by the emperor to feed his guards, is written in lines of lead on the livid faces of the unfortunate wretches, deprived of wholesome and even sufficient nutriment by men who care only to enrich themselves as rapidly as possible, unmindful of the disgrace they are bringing on their government, and of the maledictions of the regiments of slaves whom they kill. Finally, at each step I here take, I see rising before me the phantom of Siberia, and I think of all that is implied in the name of that political desert, that abyss of misery, that tomb of living men, —a land peopled with infamous criminals and sublime heroes, a colony without which this empire would be as incomplete as a palace without cellars.

A traveller who would allow himself to be indoctrinated by the people of the country, might overrun the empire from one end to the other, and return home without having surveyed any thing but a series of façadès. This is what he should do in order to please his entertainers. I am aware that such is the case, but so high a price for their hospitality I cannot afford to pay.

Provided a stranger shows himself rdiculously active, rises early after having retired to rest late, never fails to attend every ball and review, in short, provided he keeps too constantly in motion to be able to think, he is well received everywhere, well thought of, and well fêted; a crowd of strangers press his

hand every time that the emperor may have spoken to him, smiles are lavishly bestowed, and on leaving, he is pronounced a distinguished traveller. He reminds me of the bourgeois gentleman played upon by the Mufti of Molière. The Russians have coined a French word that admirably designates their political hospitality; in speaking of foreigners whom they blind by means of fêtes—"we must *garland* them*," they say. But let the stranger be on his guard lest he should for a moment betray any relaxation of zeal; at the least symptom of fatigue, or of penetration, he will see the Russian spirit, the most caustic of all spirits, rising up against him like an enraged serpent.†

Ridicule, that empty consolation of the oppressed, is here the pleasure of the peasant, as sarcasm is the accomplishment of the noble; irony and imitation are the only natural talents which I have discovered among the Russians. The stranger once exposed to the venom of their criticism would never recover from it; he would be passed from mouth to mouth like a deserter running the gauntlet; and finally be trampled under the feet of a crowd the most hardened and ambitious in the world. The ambitious have always a pleasure in ruining others: "Destroy him as a precaution, there will at any rate be one the

* Il faut les *enguirlander*.

† A well known means of flattery, and one of which the success is certain, is to exhibit one's self in the streets of Petersburg before the eyes of the Emperor without great coat or cloak: a heroic flattery of the climate which may cost the life of him who practises it. It is not difficult to displease in a land where such modes of pleasing are in use.

less; every man must be viewed as a rival because it is possible that he may become one."

I have no greater belief in the probity of the *mugic*. They tell me that he would not conceal a flower in the garden of his emperor; that I do not dispute. I know that fear will produce miracles, but I know also that this model people, these peasant courtiers do not scruple to rob their lordly rivals on a day, when too much affected by their presence at the palace, and too confident in the honourable sentiments of the serf ennobled for the hour, they cease for one moment to watch the movements of the said serf's hands.

Yesterday, at the imperial and popular ball of the palace of Peterhoff, the Sardinian ambassador had his watch very adroitly extracted notwithstanding the chain which formed its guard. Several people lost also their handkerchiefs and other articles in the press. I myself lost a purse lined with a few ducats, and consoled myself for the loss in laughing at the eulogies lavished on the probity of this people by its lords. The latter well know the real value of all their fine phrases, and I am not sorry to know it also. In observing their futile finesses, I seek for the dupes of falsehoods so puerile, and I cry, with Basil, "Who is deceiving here? All the world is in the secret."

In vain do the Russians talk and pretend; every honest observer can only see in them the Greeks of the Lower Empire formed in accordance with the rules of modern strategy by the Prussians of the eighteenth and the French of the nineteenth century.

The popularity of an autocrat appears to me as

suspicious in Russia, as does the honesty of the men who in France preach absolute democracy in the name of liberty, — both are murderous sophisms. To destroy liberty in preaching liberality is assassination, for society lives by truth; to make tyranny patriarchal is assassination also.

I have one fixed political principle; it is that men can and ought to be governed without being deceived. If in private life falsehood is degrading, in public life it is criminal; every government that lies, is a conspirator more dangerous than the traitor whom it legally condemns to capital punishment; and — notwithstanding the example of certain great minds spoilt by an age of sophists, — where truth is renounced, genius forsakes its seat, and, by a strange reversion of things, the master humbles himself before the slave; for the man who deceives is below the victim of deception. This is as applicable to politics and to literature as to religion.

My idea of the possibility of making Christian sincerity subservient to politics is not so chimerical as it may appear to men of business; for it is an idea also of the Russian Emperor's, practical and clear-sighted as he undoubtedly is. I do not believe that there is at the present day a prince upon any throne who so detests falsehood and who falsifies so little as this monarch.

He has made himself the champion of monarchical power in Europe, and, it is well known, he boldly and openly maintains this position. He is not seen, as is a certain government, preaching in each different locality a different policy according to varying, and purely commercial local interests; on the con-

trary, he favours everywhere indiscriminately the principles which accord with his system. Is it thus that England is liberal, constitutional, and philanthropical?

The Emperor reads daily, from one end to the other, one French newspaper, and only one, the *Journal des Débats.* He never looks at the others, unless some interesting article is pointed out to him.

To sustain power in order to preserve social order, is, in France, the object of the best and worthiest minds; it is also the constant aim of the *Journal des Débats,* an aim prosecuted with an intellectual superiority which explains the consideration accorded to this paper in our own country, as well as in the rest of Europe.

France is suffering under the disease common to the age, she is suffering under it more than any other land; this disease is a hatred of authority; the remedy, therefore, consists in fortifying authority: such is the sentiment of the Emperor at Petersburg, and of the *Journal des Débats* at Paris.

But as they agree only in regard to the end to be obtained, they are so much the more opposed as they seem to be united. The choice of means will often cause dissension among those gathered under the same banner; they meet as allies, they separate as enemies.

The legitimacy of hereditary right appears to the Emperor of Russia the only means of attaining his end; and in forcing a little the ordinary sense of the old word "legitimacy," under pretext that there exists another more sure,—that, namely, of election

based upon the true interests of the country,—the *Journal des Débats* raises altar against altar, in the name of the salvation of society.

From the contest of these two legitimacies, one of which is blind as fate, the other wavering as passion, results an anger the more lively because the advocates of both systems lack decisive reasons, and use the same terms to arrive at opposite conclusions.

It will be seen ere this that I take pleasure in digressions; this species of irregularity leads me away like everything else that resembles liberty. I could only correct myself by offering excuses, and each time varying their oratorical expression; for then the trouble would exceed the pleasure.

The site of Peterhoff is the most beautiful that I have hitherto seen in Russia. A ridge of small elevation commands the sea, which borders the extremity of the park at about a third of a league from the palace; the latter is built on the edge of this mount, which is almost perpendicular. Magnificent flights of steps have been formed, by which you descend from terrace to terrace into the park, where are found groves of great extent and beauty, jets d'eau, and artificial cascades in the taste of those at Versailles, and structures raised on certain elevated points, from whence may be seen the shores of Finland, the arsenal of the Russian navy, the isle of Kronstadt, and, at about nine leagues towards the right, St. Petersburg, the white city, which at a distance looks bright and lively, and with its palaces with pointed roofs, its temples of plastered columns, its forests of steeples that resemble minarets, has the appearance towards evening of a wood of fir-

trees, whose silvered tops are illuminated by the ruddy glare of some great fire.

There is but little variety of vegetation in the scenery of Ingria; that of the gardens is entirely artificial, that of the country consists of a few clumps of birch of a dull green foliage, and of avenues of the same tree planted as limits between marshy meadows, and fields where no wheat grows, for what can grow under the sixtieth degree of latitude?

When I think of all the obstacles which men have conquered here in order to exist as a community, to build a city, and to maintain in it all the magnificence necessary to the vanity of great princes and great folks, I cannot see a lettuce or a rose without being tempted to exclaim—"a miracle!" If Petersburg is a Lapland in stucco, Peterhoff is the palace of Armida under glass. I can scarcely believe in the real existence of so many costly, delicate, and brilliant objects, when I recollect that a few degrees farther north, the year is divided into a day, a night, and two twilights, of three months each.

One may ride a league in the imperial park of Peterhoff without passing twice under the same avenue: imagine, then, such a park all on fire. In this icy and gloomy land the illuminations are perfect conflagrations; it might be said that the night was to make amends for the day. The trees disappear under a decoration of diamonds, in each alley there are as many lamps as leaves; it is Asia, not the real modern Asia, but the fabulous Bagdad of the Arabian Nights, or the more fabulous Babylon of Semiramis.

It is said that on the empress's birth-day, six thou-

sand carriages, thirty thousand pedestrians, and an innumerable quantity of boats leave Petersburg to proceed to, and form encampments around, Peterhoff.

It is the only day on which I have seen a real crowd in Russia. A bivouac of citizens in a country altogether military, is a rarity. Not that the army was wanting at the fête, for a body of guards and the corps of cadets were both cantonned round the residence of the sovereign. All the multitude of officers, soldiers, tradesmen, serfs, lords and masters wandered together among the woods, where night was chased away by two hundred and fifty thousand lamps. Such was the number named to me; and though I do not know whether it was correct or not, I do know that the mass of fire shed an artificial light far exceeding in clearness that of the northern day. In Russia, the emperor casts the sun into the shade. At this period of the summer, the nights recommence and rapidly increase in length; so that, without the illumination, it would have been dark for several hours under the avenues in the park of Peterhoff.

It is said, also, that in thirty-five minutes all the lamps of the illuminations in the park were lighted by eighteen hundred men. Opposite the front of the palace, and proceeding from it in a straight line towards the sea, is a canal, the surface of whose waters was so covered with the reflection of the lights upon its borders, as to produce a perspective that was magical; it might have been taken for a sheet of fire. Ariosto would perhaps have had imagination brilliant enough to describe all the wonders of this illumination: to the various groups of lamps, which

were disposed with much taste and fancy, were given numerous original forms; flowers as large as trees, suns, vases, bowers of vine leaves, obelisks, pillars, walls chased with arabesque work; in short, a world of fantastic imagery passed before the eye, and one gorgeous device succeeded another with inexpressible rapidity.

At the extremity of the canal, on an enormous pyramid of fire (it was, I believe, 70 feet high), stood the figure of the Empress, shining in brilliant white above all the red, blue, and green lights which surrounded it. It was like an aigrette of diamonds circled with gems of all hues. Every thing was on so large a scale that the mind doubted the reality which the eye beheld. Such efforts for an annual festival appeared incredible. There was something as extraordinary in the episodes to which it gave rise, as in the fête itself. During two or three nights, all the crowd of which I have spoken encamped around the village. Many women slept in their carriages, and the female peasants in their carts. These conveyances, crowded together by hundreds, formed camps which were very amusing to survey, and which presented scenes worthy of the pencil of an artist.

The Russian has a genius for the picturesque; and the cities of a day which he raises for his festal occasions, are more amusing, and have a much more national character than the real cities built in Russia by foreigners. The painful impression I have received since living among the Russians, is increased as I discover the true value of this oppressed people. The idea of what they could do if they were free, heightens the anger which I feel in seeing them as

they now are. The ambassadors with their families and suites, as well as the strangers who have been presented, are boarded and lodged at the expence of the emperor. For this object a large and charming edifice, called the English palace, is reserved. The building is a quarter of a league from the imperial palace, in a beautiful park, laid out in the English taste, and so picturesque that it appears natural. The beauty of the waters, and the irregularities of the surface, an irregularity rarely seen in the environs of Petersburg, render it very pleasant. This year, the number of foreigners being greater than usual, there is not room for them in the English palace. I do not therefore sleep there, but I dine there daily with the diplomatic corps and seven or eight hundred other individuals, at a perfectly well-served table. This is certainly magnificent hospitality. In lodging at the village, it is necessary, after dressing in uniform, to proceed in my carriage, in order to dine at this table, at which presides one of the great officers of the empire.

For the night, the director general of the theatres of the court has placed at my disposal two actor's boxes in the theatre of Peterhoff, and this lodging is the envy of every one.* It lacks nothing except a bed; and fortunately I brought my little iron couch from Petersburg. It is an indispensable necessary for an European travelling in Russia, who does not wish to pass the night on a seat, or on the floor. We carry our beds here as we would our cloaks in Spain.

* In the village there are only a small number of dirty houses, in which the rooms are let at the rate of 200 to 500 roubles per night.

For want of straw, which is a rare thing in a region that grows no wheat, my mattrass is filled with hay.

In any other country, so great an assemblage of people would produce overwhelming noise and disturbance. In Russia every thing passes with gravity, every thing takes the character of a ceremony; to see so many young persons united together for their pleasure, or for that of others, not daring either to laugh, to sing, to quarrel, to play, or to dance, one might imagine them a troop of prisoners about to proceed to their destination. That which is wanted in all I see here is not, assuredly, grandeur or magnificence, nor even taste and elegance: it is gaiety. Gaiety cannot be compelled; on the contrary, compulsion makes it fly, just as the line and the level destroy the picturesque in scenery. I see only in Russia that which is symmetrically correct, which carries with it an air of command and regulation; but that which would give a value to this order, variety, from whence springs harmony, is here unknown.

The soldiers at their bivouac are subjected to a more severe discipline than in their barracks. Such rigour, in time of peace, in the open field, and on a day of festival, reminds me of the remark of the Grand Duke Constantine. "I do not like war," he said; "it spoils the soldiers, dirts their uniforms, and destroys discipline."

The prince did not give all his reasons for disliking war, as is proved by his conduct in Poland.

On the day of the ball and the illumination, we repaired to the imperial palace at seven o'clock. The courtiers, the ambassadors, the invited foreigners, and the *soi-disant* populace, entered the state apart-

ments without any prescribed order. All the men, except the mugics, who wore their national costume, and the citizens who were robed in the cafetan, carried the tabarro, or Venetian mantle above their uniform, which was a strictly enforced regulation, this fête being called a masked ball.

We remained a considerable time, much pressed by the crowd, waiting for the appearance of the emperor and his family. As soon as this sun of the palace began to rise, the space opened before him, and, followed by his splendid *cortége*, he proceeded, without being even incommoded by the crowd, through the halls into which the moment before you might have supposed another person could not have penetrated. Wherever his majesty passed, the waves of peasants rolled back, closing instantly behind him like waters in a vessel's track.

The noble aspect of the monarch, whose head rose above all heads, awed this agitated sea into respect. It reminded me of the Neptune of Virgil; — he could not be more an emperor than he is. He danced, during two or three successive hours, polonaises with the ladies of his family and court. This dance was on former occasions no more than a cadenced and ceremonious march, but on the present, it was a real movement to the sound of music.

The emperor and his cortége wound, in a surprising manner, through the crowd, which, without foreseeing the direction he was about to take, always gave way in time, so as never to incommode the progress of the monarch.

He spoke to several of the men robed and bearded *à la Russe:* at length, towards ten o'clock, at which hour

it became dark, the illuminations, of which I have already spoken, commenced.

We had expected, during a great part of the day, that, owing to the weather, they would not have taken place. About three o'clock, while at dinner in the English palace, a squall of wind passed over Peterhoff, violently agitated the trees, and strewed the park with their branches. While coolly watching the storm, we little thought that the sisters, mothers, and friends of crowds seated at the same table with us were perishing on the water, under its terrible agency. Our thoughtless curiosity was approaching to gaiety at the very time that a great number of small vessels, which had left Petersburg for Peterhoff, were foundering in the gulf. It is now admitted that two hundred persons were drowned; others say fifteen hundred or two thousand: no one knows the truth, and the journals will not speak of the occurrence; this would be to distress the empress, and to accuse the emperor.

The disaster was kept a secret during the entire evening, nothing transpired until after the fête; and this morning the court neither appears more nor less sad than usual. There, etiquette forbids to speak of that which occupies the thoughts of all; and even beyond the palace, little is said. The life of man in this country is such as to be deemed of trifling importance even by themselves. Each one feels his existence to hang upon a thread.

Every year accidents, similar, although less extensive, cast a gloom over the fête of Peterhoff, which would change into an act of deep mourning, a solemn funeral, if others, like me, thought upon all that this

magnificence costs. But here, I am the only one who reflects. Yesterday, superstitious minds were presented with more than one gloomy prognostic. The weather, which had been fine for three weeks, changed upon the birthday of the empress. The image of that princess would not light up. The man charged with superintending this essential part of the illumination, ascended to the summit of the pyramid, but the wind extinguished his lamps as quickly as he lighted them. He reascended several times; at length his foot slipped, and he fell from a height of seventy feet, and was killed on the spot.

The shocking thinness of the empress, her air of languor, the diminished lustre of her eye, rendered these presages more ominous. Her life, like a disease, may be said to be mortal: fêtes and balls every evening! There is no choice here but that of dying of amusement, or of ennui.

For the empress as well as the zealous courtiers, the spectacle of parades and reviews commences early in the morning. These are always followed by some receptions; the empress then retires for a quarter of an hour, after which she rides out in her carriage for two hours. She next takes a bath before again going out on horseback. Returned a second time, she has some more visiters to receive: this over, she proceeds to inspect certain useful institutions superintended by herself, or by some of those honoured with her intimacy. From thence she follows the emperor to the camp: there being always one somewhere near. They return to dance; and thus her days, her years, and her life are consumed.

Those who have not the courage or the strength

necessary to pursue this dreadful life, are not in favour.

The empress said to me the other day, in speaking of a very distinguished but delicate woman, "She is always ill!" The tone and manner in which this was spoken convinced me that the fate of a family was decided. In a sphere where good intentions are not sufficient, an indisposition is equivalent to a disgrace.

The empress does not consider herself more excused than others from paying her personal court. She cannot for a moment bear that the emperor should leave her. Princes are made of iron! This high-minded woman wishes, and at moments believes, herself free from human infirmities; but the total privation of physical and mental repose, the want of a continuous occupation, the absence of all solid conversation, the acquired necessity of excitement, all tend to nurse a fever which is sapping life. And this dreadful mode of existence has become as indispensable as it is fatal. She cannot now either abandon it or sustain it. Atrophy is feared, and, above all, the winter of Petersburg is dreaded; but nothing can induce her to pass six months away from the emperor.*

In observing her interesting though emaciated figure wandering like a spectre through a scene of festivity celebrated in her honour, and which she will perhaps never witness again, my heart sunk within me, and, dazzled as I may have been with human pomp and grandeur, I turned to reflect on

* The following year, the waters of Ems restored the health of the empress.

the miseries to which our nature is exposed. Alas! the loftier the height from which we fall, the severer is the shock. The great expiate in one day, even in this world, all the privations of the poor during a long life.

The inequality of conditions disappears under the levelling pressure of suffering. Time is but an illusion, which passion disperses. The intensity of the feeling, whether of joy or of grief, is the measure of the reality.

Persons, even of the highest elevation, act unwisely when they pretend to amuse themselves on any fixed day. An anniversary regularly celebrated only aids in more deeply impressing the mind with the progress of time, by suggesting comparison between the present and the past. The memories of the past, celebrated with rejoicings, always inspire us with a crowd of melancholy ideas, visions of vanished early youth, and prospects of declining life. At the return of each yearly fête we have ever some fewer joys, some increased sorrows, to contemplate. The change being so sad, were it not better to let the days fly past in silence? Anniversaries are the plaintive voices of the tomb, the solemn echoes of time.

Yesterday, at the close of the ball, we supped; then almost melted, for the heat of the apartments in which the crowd was gathered was insupportable, we entered certain carriages belonging to the court, called *lignes*, and made the tour of the illuminations; beyond the influence of which the night was very dark and cool. The incredible profusion of lights spread over the enchanted forest produced, however, within

its shades an extraordinary heat, and we were warmed as well as dazzled.

The *lignes* are a species of carriage with double seats, on which eight persons can conveniently sit, back to back. Their shape, gilding, and the antique trappings of the horses impart to them an air of grandeur and originality.

Objects of luxury impressed with a really royal character are now rarely seen in Europe.

The number of these equipages is considerable. They form one of the magnificent displays of the fête of Peterhoff. There was room in them for all invited, except the serfs and citizens.

A master of the ceremonies had pointed out to me the *ligne* in which I was to ride, but in the disorder of the departure no one kept his place. I could neither find my servant nor my cloak, and at length was obliged to mount one of the last of the *lignes*, where I seated myself by the side of a Russian lady who had not been to the ball, but who had come from Petersburg to show the illumination to her daughters. The conversation of these ladies, who appeared to know all the families of the court, was frank, in which respect it differed from that of those connected with the palace. The mother immediately commenced conversing with me: her manner had that facility and good taste about it which discovered the woman of rank. I recognised in her conversation, as I had already done elsewhere, that when the Russian women are natural, mildness and indulgence towards others is not a prominent trait in their character. She named to me all the persons we saw passing us; for in this procession

the train of *lignes* often divided and filed before each other at the crossings of the alleys.

If I were not afraid of wearying the reader, I should exhaust all the formulæ of admiration in repeating that I have never seen any thing so extraordinary as this illuminated park, traversed in solemn silence by the carriages of the court, in the midst of a crowd as dense as was that of the peasants in the saloons of the palace a few minutes before.

We rode for about an hour among enchanted groves, and made the tour of a lake situated at the extremity of the park, and called the lake of Marly. Versailles and all the magical creations of Louis XIV. haunted the imagination of the princes of Europe for more than a hundred years. It was at this lake of Marly that the illuminations appeared to me the most extraordinary. At the extremity of the piece of water, — I was going to say the piece of gold, so luminous and brilliant did it appear, — stands a house which was the residence of Peter the Great, and which was illuminated like the others. The water and the trees added singularly to the effect of the lights. We passed before grottoes, whose radiant interior was seen through a cascade of water falling over the mouth of the brilliant cavern. The imperial palace only was not illuminated, but its white walls became brilliant by the immense masses of light reflected upon them from all parts of the park.

This ride was unquestionably the most interesting feature in the fête of the empress. But I again repeat, scenes of magic splendour do not constitute scenes of gaiety. No one here laughed, sung, or

danced; they all spoke low; they amused themselves with precaution; it seemed as though the Russian subjects were so broken into politeness as to be respectful even to their pleasures. In short, liberty was wanting at Peterhoff, as it is every where else in Russia.

I reached my chamber, or rather my box, after midnight. From that time, the retreat of the spectators commenced, and while the torrent swept under my window, I sat down to write, for sleep would have been impossible in the midst of so much uproar. In this country, the horses alone have permission to make a noise. Conveyances of all forms and sizes thundered along amid a crowd of men, women, and children, on foot.

It was natural life recommencing after the constraint of a royal fête. One might have supposed them prisoners delivered from their chains. The people of the road were no longer the disciplined crowd of the park. They rushed along in the direction of Petersburg with a violence and a rapidity that recalled to my mind the descriptions of the retreat from Moscow. Several accidents on the road aided the illusion.

Scarcely had I time to undress and throw myself on my bed, than I found it necessary to be again on foot, to witness the review of the corps of cadets, who were to pass before the emperor.

My surprise was great to find the court already at its post; the women in their morning dresses, the men in their coats of office; everybody awaited the emperor at the place of rendezvous. The desire of proving themselves zealous animated this em-

broidered crowd, who all showed so much alacrity that it seemed as if the splendour and fatigues of the night had weighed only upon me. I blushed for my indolence, and felt that I was not born to make a good Russian courtier. The chain, though gilded, did not appear to me the less heavy.

I had but just time to make my way through the crowd before the arrival of the empress, and had not yet gained my place, when the emperor commenced inspecting the ranks of his infant officers, while the empress, so overcome with fatigue the previous evening, waited for him in a calèche in the midst of the square. I felt for her, but the extreme exhaustion under which she had seemed to suffer during the ball had disappeared. My pity, therefore, turned upon myself, and I saw with envy the oldest people of the court lightly bearing the burden which I found so heavy. Ambition, here, is the condition of life: without its artificial stimulus the people would be always dull and gloomy. The emperor's own voice directed the manœuvres of the pupils. After several had been perfectly well executed, his majesty appeared satisfied. He took the hand of one of the youngest of the cadets, led him forth from the ranks to the empress, and then, raising the child in his arms to the height of his head; that is, above the head of every body else, he kissed him publicly. What object had the emperor in showing himself so good-natured on this day before the public? This they either could not or would not tell me.

I asked the people around me who was the happy father of the model cadet, thus loaded with the favour of the sovereign: no one satisfied my curi-

osity. In Russia every thing is turned into mystery. After this sentimental parade, the emperor and empress returned to the palace of Peterhoff, where they received in the state apartments such as wished to pay their court. Afterwards, at about eleven o'clock, they appeared on one of the balconies of the palace, before which the soldiers of the Circassian guard, mounted on their superb Asiatic horses, went through some interesting exercises. The beauty of this gorgeously clad troop adds to the military luxury of a court which, notwithstanding its efforts and pretensions, is, and for a long time will remain, more oriental than European. Towards noon, feeling my curiosity exhausted, and not possessing the all-powerful stimulus of that court ambition which here achieves so many miracles to supply my natural forces, I returned to my bed, from whence I have just risen to finish this recital.

I purpose remaining here the rest of the day, in order to let the crowd pass by; and I am also detained at Peterhoff by the hope of a pleasure to which I attach much value.

To-morrow, if I have time, I will relate the success of my machinations.

CHAP. XVI. *

COTTAGE OF PETERHOFF. — A SURPRISE. — THE EMPRESS. — HER DRESS, MANNERS, AND CONVERSATION. — THE HEREDITARY GRAND DUKE. — AN EMBARRASSING QUESTION. — INTERIOR OF THE COTTAGE. — THE GRAND DUKE ACTS AS CICERONE. — TIMIDITY IN SOCIETY. — THE PRINCE AND THE YOUNG LADY. — CABINET OF THE EMPEROR. — CASTLE OF ORANIENBAUM. — FORTRESS OF PETER III. — ACCOUNT OF HIS ASSASSINATION. — THE SUMMER HOUSES OF THE EMPRESS CATHERINE. — THE CAMP OF KRAS NACSÉLO.

I HAD earnestly begged Madame —— to procure for me admission to the English cottage of the emperor and empress. It is a small house which they have built in the midst of the noble park of Peterhoff, in the new Gothic style so much in vogue in England. "Nothing is more difficult than to enter the cottage," replied Madame —— "during the time that their majesties remain here, and nothing would be more easy in their absence. However, I will try."

I therefore prolonged my stay at Peterhoff, waiting, with some impatience, but without much hope, for the answer of Madame ——. Yesterday morning early, I received a little note from her, thus worded, "Let me see you at a quarter before eleven. I am permitted, as a very particular favour, to show you the cottage at the hour when the emperor and empress take their walk; that is at eleven o'clock precisely. You know their punctuality."

* Written at Petersburg.

I did not fail to keep the appointment. Madame —— resides at a very pretty mansion, built in a corner of the park. She follows the empress everywhere, but she occupies, when possible, some separate house, although in the immediate vicinity of the different imperial residences. I was with her at half past ten. At a quarter before eleven we entered a carriage and four, crossed the park rapidly, and at a few minutes before eleven arrived at the gate of the cottage.

It is, as I have said, quite an English residence, surrounded with flowers, shaded with trees, and built in the style of the prettiest places that may be seen near to London, about Twickenham, on the borders of the Thames. We crossed a rather small vestibule raised a few steps, and had just stopped to examine a room, the furniture of which struck me as a little too *recherché* for the general character of the building, when a *valet de chambre* came to whisper a few words in the ear of Madame ——, who seemed surprised.

"What is the matter?" I asked, when the man had disappeared.

"The empress is returned!"

"How unfair!" I exclaimed, "I shall not have time to see anything."

"Perhaps not; go down into the garden by this terrace, and wait for me at the entrance of the house."

I was scarcely there two minutes before I saw the empress rapidly descending the steps of the house and coming towards me. She was alone. Her tall and slender figure possesses a singular grace; her walk is active, light, and yet noble; she has certain move-

ments of the arms and hands, certain attitudes, a certain turn of the head, that it is impossible to forget. She was dressed in white; her face, surrounded with a white calash appeared calm and composed; her eyes had an expression of gentleness and melancholy; a veil, gracefully thrown back, shaded her features, a transparent scarf fell over her shoulders, and completed the most elegant of morning dresses. Never had I seen her to so much advantage. Before this apparition, the sinister omens of the ball disappeared: the empress seemed resuscitated, and I experienced in beholding her, that sense of security which, after a night of trouble and agitation, returns with the dawn of day. Her majesty must, I thought, be stronger than I, to have thus supported the fête of the day before yesterday, the review and the soirée of yesterday, and to appear to-day so well and beautiful.

"I have shortened my promenade," she said, "because I knew that you were here."

"Ah! Madame, I was far from expecting so much goodness."

"I said nothing of my project to Madame ——, who has been scolding me for thus coming to surprise you; she pretends that I shall disturb you in your survey. You expect then to discover all our secrets?"

"I should like, Madame; one could not but gain by acquaintance with the ideas of those who know so well how to choose between splendour and elegance."

"The residence at Peterhoff is insupportable to me, and it is to relieve my eyes from the glare of all that massive gold, that I have begged a cottage of the emperor. I have never been so happy as in this house; but now that one of my daughters is married,

and that my sons pursue their studies elsewhere, it has become too large for us."

I smiled, without replying: I was under a charm: it seemed to me that this woman, so different from her in whose honour was given the sumptuous fête that had just taken place, could share with me all my impressions; she has felt like me, I thought, the weariness, the emptiness, the false brilliancy of this public magnificence, and she now feels that she is worthy of something better. I compared the flowers of the cottage with the lustres of the palace, the sun of a bright morning to the illuminations of a night of ceremony, the silence of a delicious retreat to the tumult of a palace crowd, the festival of nature to the festival of a court, the woman to the empress; and I was enchanted with the good taste and the sense which this princess had shown in flying the satiéties of public display, to surround herself with all that constitutes the charm of private life. It was a new fairy scene, the illusion of which captivated my imagination much more strongly than the magic of splendour and power.

"I would not explain myself to Madame ——," continued the empress. "You shall see all over the cottage, and my son shall show it you. Meanwhile, I will go and visit my flowers, and shall find you again before we allow you to leave."

Such was the reception I met with from this lady, who is represented as haughty, not only in Europe, where she is scarcely known, but in Russia where they see her constantly.

At this moment, the hereditary Grand-duke joined his mother. He was accompanied by Madame ——, and her eldest daughter, a young person about four-

teen years of age, fresh as a rose, and pretty as they were in France, in the times of Boucher. This young lady is the living model of one of the most agreeable portraits of that painter.

I expected the empress to give me my *congé*, but she commenced walking backwards and forwards before the house. Her majesty knew the interest I took in all the family of Madame ——, who is a Polish lady. Her majesty knew also that for some years past one of the brothers of Madame —— had lived at Paris. She turned the conversation to this young man's mode of life; and questioned me for a long time, with marked interest, regarding his sentiments, opinions and general character. This gave me every facility for saying of him all that my attachment dictated. She listened to me very attentively. When I had ceased speaking, the Grand-duke addressing his mother, continued the same subject and said, "I met him at Ems, and liked him very well."

"And yet, it is a man thus distinguished whom they forbid to come here, because he retired into Germany after the revolution in Poland," cried Madame ——, moved by her sisterly affection, and using that freedom of expression of which the habit of living at court from her infancy has not deprived her. "But what has he done then?" said the empress, addressing me, with an accent that was inimitable for the mixture of impatience and kindness which it expressed. I was embarrassed to find an answer to a question so direct, for it involved the delicate subject of politics, and to touch upon this subject might spoil everything.

The Grand-duke came to my aid with an affability

and a kindness which I should be very ungrateful to forget; no doubt he thought I had too much to say to dare to answer; and anticipating some evasion which might have betrayed my embarrassment, and compromised the cause I desired to plead, "My mother," he said, with vivacity, "who ever asked a child of fifteen years what he had done in politics?"

This answer, full of sense and of good feeling, extricated me from the difficulty, but it put an end to the conversation. If I might dare to interpret the silence of the empress, I should say that this was her thought—"What could now be done, in Russia, with a pardoned Pole? He would always be an object of envy to the old Russians, and he would only inspire his new masters with distrust. His health and life would be lost in the trials to which he would have to be exposed in order to test his fidelity; and if, at length, they came to the conclusion that he might be trusted, they would only despise him. Besides, what could I do for this young man? I have so little influence!"

I do not believe I much deceive myself in saying, that such were the thoughts of the empress; such were also pretty nearly mine. We tacitly agreed in concluding that of two evils, the least for a gentleman who had lost both his fellow citizens and his comrades in arms, was to remain far from the land which had given him birth; the worst of all conditions would be that of a man who should live as a stranger in his own home.

On a sign from the empress, the Grand-duke, Madame ——, her daughter, and myself, re-entered the cottage. I should have wished to have found less

luxurious furniture in this house, and a greater number of objects of virtu. The ground-floor resembled that of all the houses of rich and elegant English people, but not one picture of a high order, not one fragment of marble, or of *terra cotta*, announced that the owners of the place had a love for the arts. It is not to be able to draw more or less skilfully, but it is the taste for *chefs-d'œuvre* that proves a love for and a judgment in the arts. I always regret to see the absence of this passion in those with whom it could be so easily gratified.

It may be said that statues and pictures of great value would be out of place in a cottage; but this house is the chosen and favourite resort of its possessors; and when people form for themselves an abode according to their fancy, if they have much love for the arts, that love will betray itself, at the risk even of some incongruity of style, some fault of harmony: besides, a little anomaly is allowable in an imperial cottage. Over the distribution of the ornaments of this cottage, and the general arrangements of its interior, it could be easily discovered that family affections and habits had chiefly presided; and these are worth even yet more than an appreciation of the beautiful in the works of genius. Only one thing really displeased me in the furniture and the arrangements of this elegant retreat, and that was a too servile adherence to English fashions.

We looked over the ground-floor very hastily, for fear of wearying our guide. The presence of so august a *cicerone* embarrassed me. I know that nothing so annoys princes as our timidity; at least, unless it be affected in order to flatter them. They love to be

put at their ease, and we cannot do that without being at ease ourselves. With a grave prince I could have hoped to save myself by conversation, but with a gay and youthful prince, I was left without resource.

A staircase, very narrow, but adorned with an English carpet, conducted us to the upper floor. We there saw the chamber where the Grand-duchess Marie passed a part of her infancy; it is empty: that of the Grand-duchess Olga will not probably remain long occupied. The empress might truly say that the cottage was becoming too large. These two very similar chambers are furnished with a charming simplicity.

The Grand-duke stopped at the top of the stairs, and said with that perfect politeness, of which (notwithstanding his extreme youth) he possesses the secret, — "I am sure that you would rather see everything here without me; and I have seen it all so often, that I would, I confess, as willingly leave you to finish your survey with Madame ——. I will therefore join my mother, and wait for you with her."

Whereupon he saluted us gracefully, and left me, charmed with the flattering ease of his manners. It is a great advantage to a prince to be really well bred. I had not, then, this time, produced the effect that I anticipated; the constraint that I felt had not been communicated. If he had sympathised with my uneasiness, he would have remained, for timidity can do nothing but submit to its torture; it knows not how to free itself; no elevation is safe from its attacks: the victim whom it paralyses,

in whatever rank he may be placed, cannot find strength either to confront or to fly from that which produces his discomfort.

This suffering is sometimes the effect of a discontented or over-wrought self-love. A man who fears that he stands alone in his opinion of himself, becomes timid through vanity: but more often, timidity is purely physical; — it is a disease.

There are men who cannot, without an inexplicable sense of uneasiness, be conscious that the human eye rests upon them. That eye paralyses them; fetters their thoughts, their speech, and more especially their movements. This is so true, that I have often suffered from physical timidity, in villages where, as a stranger, I attracted all eyes, much more than in the most stately saloons where nobody paid any attention to me. I could write a treatise on the different kinds of shyness, for I am the accomplished model of them all. No one has suffered more than I have, from my infancy, under the attacks of this incurable disease, scarcely known to the rising generation; which proves that, over and above physical predisposition, timidity is peculiarly the result of education. Familiarity with the world enables us to dissimulate the infirmity, and that is all. The most timid men are often the most eminent in birth, in dignity, and even in merit. I long believed that timidity was modesty combined with an exaggerated respect for social distinctions, or for the gifts of mind; but how then could be explained the timidity of great writers, or of princes? Happily, the princes of the imperial Russian family are by no means timid — they belong to their age; neither in their

manners nor language can be perceived any vestiges of that embarrassment, which for a long period tormented the august inmates of Versailles, and their courtiers also; for what can be more embarrassing than a timid prince?

Whatever may have been the cause, I felt relieved when I saw the Grand-duke depart; I thanked him inwardly for having so well guessed my wish, and for having so politely gratified it. A man but half-polished would scarcely have taken it into his head to leave people alone with the view of making himself agreeable to them: nevertheless, it is sometimes the greatest kindness that can be accorded. To know how to leave a guest without wounding his feelings, is the height of urbanity — the *chef-d'œuvre* of hospitality. This facility is in the fashionable world what liberty without disorder would be in the political — a problem constantly proposed, and never solved.

At the moment when the Grand-duke left us, Mademoiselle —— was standing behind her mother. The prince, as he passed her, stopped, and in a very grave but rather humorous manner, made her a profound reverence, without speaking a word. The young lady, perceiving that this salutation was ironical, remained in a respectful attitude, but without returning the obeisance. I admired this little expression of feeling, which appeared to me to exhibit an exquisite delicacy. I doubt whether at the Russian court, any woman of twenty-five would have distinguished herself by an act of so much courage; it was dictated only by that innocence, which to the regard due to social prerogatives knows how to join a just sentiment

of its own dignity. The exhibition of tact did not pass unperceived.

"Always the same!" said the Grand-duke, as he turned away.

They had been children together; a difference of five years in age had not prevented them from often playing at the same games. Such familiarity is not forgotten, even at court. The silent scene which they now enacted together much amused me.

My peep into the interior of the imperial family has interested me extremely. These princes must be nearly approached in order to be appreciated. They are made to be at the head of their country; for they are in every respect superior to their people. The imperial family is the object the most worthy of exciting the admiration and the envy of foreigners that I have seen in Russia.

At the top of the house we found the cabinet of the emperor. It is a tolerably large and very simply ornamented library, opening on a balcony which overlooks the sea. Without leaving this watch-tower, the Emperor can give his orders to his fleet. For this purpose he has a spy-glass, a speaking-trumpet, and a little telegraph which he can work himself.

I should have liked to examine this room and all it contains in detail, and to have asked many questions, but I feared lest my curiosity might seem indiscreet, and I preferred making an imperfect survey, to appearing as if I had come to take an inventory.

Besides, I am more curious about the general appearance of things than about their minute details. I travel to observe, and to form an opinion of objects, but not to measure, catalogue, or sketch them. It is

a favour to be admitted into this cottage thus, as it were, in the presence of its occupants;—a favour the more rarely conceded as the house really offers no other interest beyond the curiosity which attaches to their habits and their private life. I therefore felt as though I ought to show myself worthy of the privilege by avoiding too minute an investigation.

After having explained this feeling to Madame ——, who perfectly understood my delicacy, I hastened to take leave of the empress and the grand-duke. We found them in the garden, where, after some further gracious words, they left me, satisfied with everything I had seen; but, above all, grateful for their kindness, and charmed with the singular grace of their accessible manners.

After leaving the cottage, I proceeded to pay a hasty visit to Oranienbaum, the celebrated residence of Catherine II., built by Menzikoff. This unfortunate man was sent to Siberia before he had completed the wonders of a palace deemed too royal for a minister.

It now belongs to the Grand-duchess Helena, sister-in-law of the present emperor. Situated two or three leagues from Peterhoff, in sight of the sea, and on a continuation of the same ridge on which is built the imperial palace, the castle of Oranienbaum, although constructed of wood, is an imposing edifice. Notwithstanding the imprudent luxury of the builder, and the greatness of the personages who have, after him, inhabited it, it is not remarkable for its extent. Terraces, flights of steps, and balconies covered with orange trees and flowering plants, connect the house with the park, and embellish both the one and the other; but the architecture itself is anything but

magnificent. The Grand-duchess Helena has shown here the taste which presides throughout all her arrangements, and which has made Oranienbaum a charming residence, notwithstanding the dulness of the landscape, and the besetting memories of the scenes formerly enacted there.

On leaving the palace, I asked permission to see the remains of the small but strong fortress, from whence they obliged Peter III. to come forth, and carried him to Ropscha, where he was assassinated. I was conducted to a retired hamlet, where are to be seen dry ditches, broken mounds, and heaps of stones, a modern ruin, in the production of which policy has had more to do than time. But the enforced silence, the purposely-created solitude which reigns around these accursed remains, summon up before the mind precisely that which is sought to be concealed; the official lie is annulled by the historic fact. History is a magical mirror, in which the people see, after the death of men who were influential in public affairs, the real, unmasked reflection of their faces. Those faces have passed away, but their images remain engraved on this inexorable crystal. Truth cannot be buried with the dead. It rises triumphant over the fear of princes and the flattery of people, always powerless when they endeavour to stifle the cry of blood; and it finds its way through prisons, and even through the tomb, especially the tomb of the great, for obscure persons succeed better than princes in concealing the crimes which stain their memory. If I had not known that the fortress of Peter III. had been demolished, I should have guessed it; but what astonishes me, in seeing the wish here exhibited to

create oblivion of the past, is that anything connected with it should be preserved. The names ought to be destroyed, as well as the walls. It was not sufficient to demolish the fortress, they should have also razed the palace, which is only a quarter of a league distant. Whoever visits Oranienbaum inquires with anxiety for the vestiges of the prison where Peter III. was compelled to sign his *voluntary* abdication, which became also his death-warrant,—for, the sacrifice once obtained, it was necessary to prevent his revoking it.

The following is the account of the assassination of this prince at Ropscha, taken from M. de Rulhière's "History of Poland."

"The soldiers were astonished at their own deed. They could not conceive by what wicked enchantment they could have been induced to dethrone the grandson of Peter the Great, in order to place his crown upon a German. The greater number, without object or idea of their own, had been led on by others; and each, after the pleasure of disposing of a crown had vanished, felt only remorse. The seamen, who had not been associated in the insurrection, publicly accused the guards in the taverns of having sold their emperor for beer. Pity, which excuses even the greatest criminals, began to plead in all hearts. One evening a troop of soldiers attached to the empress created much disturbance under a vague fear that their 'mother' was in danger. She had to be roused up in order that they might see her. On the following night a new and more dangerous disturbance took place. So long as the life of the emperor left a pretext for disquietude, it was thought that there would be no tranquillity.

"One of the Counts Orloff (for, on the first day of the troubles this title had been given them), the same soldier, surnamed *le balafré**, who had abstracted the note from the Princess d'Aschekof, and one Teplof, a person who had risen from the lowest employs by the singular art with which he had ruined his rivals, went together to the unhappy prince, and announced to him, on entering, that they had come to dine with him. Before the repast, they caused glasses of brandy to be brought, according to the Russian custom. In that of the emperor was poison. But, whether rendered precipitate by their haste to carry the news of their success, or by the horror with which their action inspired them, they wished the moment after to make him take a second glass. His already burning stomach, and the horrible expression of their faces, rendered him, however, suspicious, and he refused the glass. To make him drink it, they resorted to force, and the emperor resisted. In this terrible strife, in order to stifle his cries, which could be heard at a distance, they threw themselves upon him. As he defended himself with all the energy of despair, and as it was necessary to avoid marking his body with wounds, fear for themselves at length induced them to call to their aid the two officers who had been appointed to guard his person, and who were waiting outside at the door of his prison. These were the youngest of the princes Baratinski, and one Potemkin, a youth of seventeen. They had shown so much zeal in the conspiracy, that, notwithstanding their extreme youth, this guard had

* One whose visage is marked with the scar of a wound.—*Trans.*

been entrusted to them. They immediately appeared, and three of these murderers having closely tied a napkin round the neck of the unhappy emperor, Orloff pressed his knees upon his breast until he lay lifeless in their hands.

"It is not known with certainty what part the empress took in the event; but it is known, that on the day that it took place this princess was sitting down to dinner in a very good humour, when the same Orloff, covered with sweat and dust, his hair dishevelled, his clothes torn, his countenance agitated and full of horror, appeared before her. On entering, his anxious eyes sought those of the empress. She rose without speaking, entered a cabinet, into which he followed her, and some minutes after she called Count Panin, already appointed her minister, and informed him that the emperor was dead. Panin advised her to let the evening pass in silence, and to spread the news in the morning, as though it had been received during the night. This counsel being agreed upon, the empress returned to the table with the same unperturbed countenance, and continued her dinner in the good humour with which it had been commenced. On the morrow, when it was spread abroad that Peter had died of a hemorrhoidal colic, she appeared bathed in tears, and published her grief by an edict."

In looking over the park of Oranienbaum, which is large and beautiful, I visited several of the summer-houses, which were the scenes of the Empress's amorous assignations. Some of them were splendid pavilions, others exhibited bad taste. In general their architecture lacked purity of style, though

certainly pure enough for the uses to which the goddess of the place destined them.

I returned to Peterhoff, and slept, for the third night, in the theatre. This morning, in returning to Petersburg, I took the road by Krasnacselo, where a large camp is formed. Forty thousand men of the imperial guard are, it is said, lodged there under tents, or dispersed in the neighbouring villages. Others say the number is seventy thousand. In Russia every one imposes upon me his own estimate, to which I pay little attention, for nothing is more deceptive than these statements. They serve to show, however, the importance that is attached to leading people astray. Nations rise above such childish stratagems when they pass from infancy to a state of manhood.

I was much amused with viewing the variety of uniforms, and with comparing the expressive and savage faces of these soldiers, who are brought from every part of the empire. Long lines of white tents glistened in the sun, on a surface broken into small undulations in a manner that produced a picturesque effect.

I am constantly regretting the insufficiency of words to describe certain scenes in the north, and, above all, certain effects of light. A few strokes of the pencil would give a better idea of the original aspect of this melancholy and singular land, than whole volumes of description.

CHAP. XVII.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE EMPEROR. — EFFECTS OF THE STORM AT PETERHOFF. — DEATH OF TWO ENGLISHMEN. — THE MYSTERY IN WHICH ALL OCCURRENCES ARE ENVELOPED. — A STEAM-BOAT SAVED BY AN ENGLISHMAN. — THE RUSSIAN POLICE. — DISAPPEARANCE OF A FEMME DE CHAMBRE. — POLITENESS AND BRUTALITY UNITED. — CRUELTY OF A FELD JAGER. — QUARREL AMONG WORK-PEOPLE, AND THE REVOLTING CRUELTY OF THE POLICE. — THE EMPEROR A REFORMER. — THE COLUMN OF ALEXANDER. — REFORM IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE COURT. — THE CHURCH OF SAINT ISAAC. — ITS IMMENSITY. — SPIRIT OF THE GREEK RELIGION. — ITS DEGRADATION. — CONVERSATION WITH A FRENCHMAN. — A TRAVELLING PRISON. — INSURRECTION CAUSED BY A SPEECH OF THE EMPEROR'S. — BLOODY SCENES ON THE WOLGA. — HISTORY OF THE POET POUSKINE. — HIS DUEL AND DEATH. — FATE OF HIS AMBITIOUS SUCCESSOR. — THE POETRY OF POUSKINE. — EFFECTS OF THE ADOPTION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES IN RUSSIA. — CONSEQUENCES OF THE RAGE FOR ENGLISH NURSES AND GOVERNESSES IN FRANCE. — SUPERIORITY OF THE CHINESE. — THE CONFUSION OF TONGUES. — ROUSSEAU. — DECLINE OF FRENCH LITERATURE.

ACCORDING to information that I have obtained this morning respecting the disaster of the fête of Peterhoff, its extent has exceeded my expectations. But we shall never ascertain the exact circumstances of the event. Every accident here, is treated as an affair of state: it is God who has failed in his duty to the emperor.

Political superstition, which is the soul of the Muscovite community, exposes its chieftain to all the complaints that impotence may bring against power,

that earth may urge against heaven. If my dog is hurt, it is to me that he comes for the cure of his wound; if God afflicts the Russians, they immediately call upon their czar. This prince, who is responsible for nothing in politics, must answer for every thing in Providence; a natural consequence of man's usurpation of the rights of God. A man who allows himself to be considered as more than a mortal, takes upon himself all the evil that heaven may send upon earth during his reign. There results from this species of political fanaticism, a susceptibility, and jealous delicacy of which no idea can be formed in other lands. Nevertheless, the secrecy which policy believes it necessary to maintain on the subject of misfortunes the least dependent upon human will, fails in its object, inasmuch as it leaves the field open to imagination. Every one relates the same transaction differently, according to his interest, his fears, his ambition, or his humour; according to his situation at court, or his position in the world. Hence it is, that truth, in Petersburg is an imaginary thing, just as it has become in France, although from different causes. An arbitrary censorship and an unlimited liberty may lead to the same results, and render impossible the verification of the most simple fact.

Thus, some say that there were only thirty persons who perished the day before yesterday, while others speak of twelve hundred, others of two thousand, and others again of one hundred and fifty. Imagine the uncertainty in which every thing must be involved, when the circumstances of an event that took place, as it were, under our eyes, will always remain

unknown, even to ourselves. I shall never cease to marvel at having seen a people exist, so thoughtless as readily and tranquilly to live and die in the twilight which the policy of its masters accords it. Hitherto I had been accustomed to believe that man could no more dispense with truth for his mind than with sun and air for his body; but my Russian journey has undeceived me. Truth is only needful to elevated minds or to advanced nations; the vulgar accommodate themselves to the falsehoods favourable to their passions and habits; here, to lie, is to protect society, to speak the truth is to overthrow the state. The twilight of politics is less transparent than the polar sky.

For the authenticity of one of the accidents connected with the catastrophe of Peterhoff I can vouch.

Three young Englishmen, the eldest of whom I know, had been some days in Petersburg. Their father is in England, and their mother waits them at Carlsbad. On the day of the fête, the two youngest sailed for Peterhoff without their brother, who constantly refused their solicitations to accompany them, alleging that he felt no curiosity. He saw them embark in their little vessel, and bade them adieu until the morrow. Three hours afterwards both were corpses! They perished together with several women and children and two or three men, who were in the same boat; a sailor, who was a good swimmer, was alone saved. The unhappy surviving brother is plunged in a despair which would be difficult to describe. He is preparing to leave, to join his mother and apprise her of the melancholy tidings. She had written to her sons desiring them not to omit seeing

the fête of Peterhoff, nor to hurry their departure, should their curiosity incline them to prolong their stay, intimating that she would wait patiently for them at Carlsbad. A little more urgency on her part would perhaps have saved their lives.

What numberless accounts, discussions, and proposals would not such a catastrophe have given rise to in any other land except this, and more especially in our own! How many newspapers would have said, and how many voices would have repeated, that the police never does its duty, that the boats were not seaworthy, the watermen greedy only of gain, and that the authorities, far from interfering, did but increase the danger by their indifference or their corruption! It would have been added that the marriage of the grand-duchess had been celebrated under very gloomy auspices, like many other royal marriages; and then, dates, allusions, and citations would have followed in great abundance. Nothing of the kind here! A silence more frightful than the evil itself, everywhere reigns. Two lines in the Gazette, without details, is all the information publicly given; and at court, in the city, in the saloons of fashion, not a word is spoken. There are no coffee-houses in Petersburg where people comment upon the journals; there are indeed no journals upon which to comment. The petty employés are more timid than the great lords; what is not dared to be spoken of among the principals, is yet more carefully avoided by subordinates; and as to the merchants and shopkeepers, that wily caution necessary to all who would live and thrive in the land is, by them, especially observed. If they speak on

gravé, and therefore dangerous subjects, it is only in strict and confidential privacy.*

Russia is instructed to say nothing which could render the empress nervous; and thus is she left to live and die dancing! "She would be distressed, therefore hold your peace." And hereupon, children,

* I may insert here the extract of a letter received in the present year from a female friend, which, though it does not add to, may serve to illustrate what has been already said, and to give a better idea of the subjection in which minds are held in Russia than anything I can myself say. "An Italian painter who was at Petersburg at the same time that you were, is now in Paris. He related to me, as you had done previously, the circumstances of that catastrophe, in which about four hundred individuals perished. The painter told his story in a very low voice. 'I know all this,' I said to him, 'but why do you whisper it?' 'O! because the Emperor has forbidden that it should be spoken of.' This obedience, in spite of the time that had elapsed, and the distance, excited my astonishment. But you, who cannot conceal one truth, when do you mean to publish your journey?"

I subjoin yet another illustration, taken from an article in the *Journal des Débats* of the 13th October, 1842:—In the month of October, 1840, two trains running in an opposite direction on the railroad of St. Petersburg and Krasnacselo, came into collision, owing to their engineers not having seen each other's approach, by reason of a heavy fog. Everything was shattered by the shock. Five hundred persons, it is said, lay around the broken cars, killed, mutilated, or more or less severely wounded. This was scarcely known in Petersburg. Early on the morrow, a few curious persons only ventured to visit the scene of the accident. They found the remains of the carriages cleared away, the dead and the wounded removed, and, as the sole evidence of the accident, a few agents of the police, who after interrogating them as to the motives of their morning visit, reprimanded them for their curiosity, and roughly commanded them all to return home."

friends, relations, all who are loved, die, and no one dares to even weep for them. People here are too unfortunate to complain.

The Russians are all courtiers. Soldiers, spies, gaolers, executioners in this land all do more than their duty; all ply their trade as parasites. Who shall tell me to what lengths a society may not go which is not built on the foundation of human dignity?

I repeat that as much must be undone as done, before there can be here made a people.

This time, the silence of the police is not merely the result of a desire to flatter, it is also the effect of fear. The slave dreads the angry mood of his master, and employs every effort to keep him in a state of benignity and good humour. The chains, the dungeon, the knout and Siberia, are all within reach of an irritated czar; or at the best there is the Caucasus, a Siberia mitigated to the uses of a despotism softened in accordance with the spirit of the century.

It cannot be denied that in this instance the first cause of the evil was the carelessness of the administration. If the authorities had prevented the boatmen of Petersburg from overloading their vessels, or from venturing on the gulf in craft too small or weak to ride the waves, no one would have perished; and yet, who knows? The Russians are generally bad seamen: wherever they are, there is danger. When Asiatics, with their long robes and long beards, are the sailors, there can be little surprise at hearing of shipwrecks.

On the day of the fête, one of the steam-boats that generally run between Petersburg and Kron-

stadt, started for Peterhoff. Although large and strong, it was in danger of foundering like the smaller vessels, and would have done so had it not been for a foreigner who was among the passengers. This man (who was an Englishman) seeing several vessels capsized around them, knowing the danger they were in, and observing further that the boat was badly served and badly commanded, conceived the happy idea of cutting with his own knife the cords which held the awning raised upon deck for the comfort and convenience of the passengers. The first thing that ought to have been done, upon the least sign of a squall, was to remove this pavilion. The Russians never dreamt of so simple a precaution, and had it not been for the foreigner's presence of mind the boat would have infallibly capsized. It was saved, though too much damaged to continue its voyage, and its crew only too happy in being able to return to Petersburg. If the Englishman who saved it had not been an acquaintance of another Englishman, who is one of my friends, I should not have known the fact. It was confirmed to me by other informed persons, to whom I mentioned it; but they requested that I would keep it secret!

It would not do to talk about the Deluge, if that catastrophe had happened under the reign of a Russian emperor.

Among all the intelligent faculties, the only one that is here valued is that of tact. Imagine a whole nation bending under the yoke of this drawing-room virtue. Picture to your minds an entire people, prudent as a diplomatist who has yet his fortune to make, and you will compass the idea of the substance

and worth of conversation in Russia. If the atmosphere of the court oppresses us even when at the court, how unfriendly to life must it not be when it pursues us into the very retirement of the family circle!

Russia is a nation of mutes. Some potent magician has transformed sixty millions of men into automata who must await the wand of another enchanter before they can again enjoy life. Or it reminds me of the palace of Sleeping Beauty in the wood—it is bright and magnificent, but it lacks one thing, which is life, or, in other words, liberty.

The Emperor must suffer from such a state of things. Whoever is born to command, no doubt loves obedience; but the obedience of a man is worth more than that of a machine. A prince surrounded by complaisant flatterers must always remain in ignorance of every thing which it is wished he should not know; he is, therefore, necessarily condemned to doubt every word and to distrust every individual. Such is the lot of an absolute master. In vain would he be amiable, in vain would he live as a man; the force of circumstances makes him unfeeling in spite of himself; he occupies the place of a despot, and is obliged to submit to a despot's destiny — to adopt his sentiments, or, at least, to play his part.

The evils of dissimulation extend here further than may be imagined: the Russian police, so alert to torment people, is slow to aid or enlighten them when they have recourse to its aid in doubtful situations.

The following is an example of this designed inertia. At the last carnival, a lady of my acquaintance had permitted her waiting-woman to go out on

the Sunday. Night came, and this person did not return. On the following morning the lady, very uneasy, sent to obtain information from the police.*

They replied that no accident had occurred in Petersburg on the preceding night, and that no doubt the *femme-de-chambre* had lost herself, and would soon return safe and sound.

The day passed in deceitful security. On the day following a relation of the girl's, a young man tolerably versed in the secrets of the police, conceived the idea of going to the Hall of Surgery, to which one of his friends procured him an admission. Scarcely had he entered when he recognised the corpse of his cousin, which the pupils were just about to commence dissecting. Being a good Russian, he preserved self-command sufficient to conceal his emotion, and asked — "Whose body is this?"

"No one knows: it is that of a girl's who was found dead the night before last, in —— street; it is believed that she has been strangled in attempting to defend herself against men who endeavoured to violate her."

"Who are the men?"

"We do not know: one can only form conjectures on the event; proofs are wanting."

"How did you obtain the body?"

"The police sold it to us secretly; so we will not talk about it."

This last is a common expression in the mouth of a Russ, or an acclimated foreigner. I admit that

* I have been obliged to conceal names, and to change such circumstances as might allow of this account being traced to individuals; but the facts are essentially preserved.

the above circumstances are not so revolting as those of the crime of Burke in England; but the peculiar characteristic of Russia is the protective silence in which similar atrocities are shrouded.

The cousin was dead. The mistress of the victim dared not complain; and now, after a lapse of six months, I am, perhaps, the only person to whom she has related the death of her *femme-de-chambre*.

It will by this be seen how the subaltern agents of the Russian police perform their duties. These faithless servants gained a double advantage by selling the body of the murdered woman: they obtained a few roubles, and they also concealed the murder, which would have brought upon them severe blame, if the noise of the event had got abroad.

Reprimands addressed to men of this class are, I believe, accompanied with other demonstrations, of a character likely to engrave the words indelibly in the memories of the unfortunate hearers. A Russian of the lower class is as often beaten as saluted. The lifting of the rods (in Russia the rod is a large split cane) and the lifting of the hat are means employed in about equal measure, in the social education of this people. Beating in Russia can only be applied to certain classes and by men of certain other classes. Here ill-treatment is regulated like the tariff of a custom-house; it reminds us of the code of Ivan. The dignity of caste is admitted, but no one dreams of the dignity of man. The reader will recollect what I have already said of the politeness of the Russians of all ranks, and of its real value; I will now confine myself to relating one or two of the illustrative scenes that pass daily before my eyes.

I have seen in the same street two drivers of drowskas ceremoniously lift their hats in passing each other:—this is a common custom: if acquainted, they lift their hand to their mouth with an amicable smile, and kiss it, making at the same time a little expressive and intelligent sign with the eyes: so much for politeness.

A little farther on I have seen a courier, a feld-jäger, or some other government servant, descend from his vehicle, and, running to one of these well-bred coachmen, strike him brutally and unmercifully with whip, stick, or fist, in the breast, the face, or on the head, which punishment the unlucky wight, who had not made way in sufficient haste, received without the least complaint or resistance, out of respect to the uniform and the caste of his tormenter, whose anger, however, is not always in such cases promptly disarmed by the submission of the delinquent.

Have I not seen one of these carriers of dispatches, courier of some minister, or *valet-de-chambre* of some aide-de-camp of the emperor's, drag from his seat a young coachman, and never cease striking him until he had covered his face with blood. The victim submitted to the torture like a real lamb, without the least resistance, and in the same manner as one would yield to some commotion of nature. The passers-by were in no degree moved or excited by the cruelty, and one of the comrades of the sufferer, who was watering his horses a few steps off, obedient to a sign of the enraged feld-jäger, approached to hold his horse's bridle during the time that he was pleased to prolong the punishment. In what other country could a man of the lower orders be found who would assist in

the infliction of an arbitrary punishment upon one of his companions?

The scene in question took place in the finest part of the city, and at the busiest hour. When the unfortunate man was released, he wiped away the blood, which streamed down his cheeks, re-mounted his seat, and re-commenced his bows and salutations as usual. It should be recollected that this abomination was enacted in the midst of a silent crowd. A people governed in a Christian manner would protest against a social discipline which destroys all individual liberty. But here the influence of the priest is confined to obtaining from the people and the nobles signs of the cross and genuflexions.

Notwithstanding its worship of the Holy Spirit, this nation has always its god upon earth. Like Tamerlane, the Emperor of Russia receives the idolatrous worship of his subjects; the Russian law has never been baptized.

I hear every day some encomium on the gentleness, politeness, and pacific humour of the people of Saint Petersburg. Elsewhere I should admire this calm; here, I can only view it as the worst symptom of the evil of which I complain. The people are actuated by fear to a degree that urges them to dissimulate, and to assume the appearance of a content and tranquillity which conduces to the satisfaction of the oppressor, and the security of the oppressed. Your true tyrant likes to be surrounded with smiles. Under the terror which hovers over all heads, submission becomes the general rule of conduct: victims and executioners, all practise the obe-

dience that perpetuates the evil which they inflict or to which they submit.

The intervention of the police between people who quarrel would expose the combatants to punishment yet more formidable than the blows they bear in silence, and they avoid therefore all noise that might call the executioner to the spot.

Of the following tumultuous scene chance, however, rendered me a witness this morning.

I was passing along a canal covered with boats laden with wood, which the men were carrying on shore. One of these porters got into a quarrel with his comrades, and they all commenced fighting as they might have done among ourselves on a similar occasion. The aggressor, finding himself the weakest, took to flight: he climbed, with the agility of a squirrel, a large mast of the vessel, and perching himself upon a yard, set at defiance his less nimble adversaries. So far I found the scene amusing. The men seeing themselves balked in their hope of vengeance, and forgetting that they were in Russia, manifested their fury by loud cries and savage menaces. There are found at certain distances, in all the streets of the city, agents of the police in uniform: two of these persons, attracted by the vociferations of the combatants, repaired to the scene of action, and commanded the chief offender to descend from his perch. This individual did not obey the summons; one of the policemen sprang on board; the refractory porter clung to the mast; the man of power reiterated his commands, and the rebel persisted in his disobedience. The former, infuriated, tried himself to climb the mast, and succeeded in

seizing one of the feet of the fugitive, which, without troubling himself with any consideration as to the manner in which the unfortunate being was to descend, he pulled at with all his force. The other, hopeless of escaping the punishment that awaited him, at length yielded to his fate; he let go his hold, and fell from a height of about twelve feet upon a pile of wood, on which his body lay as motionless as a sack. The severity of the fall may be imagined. The head struck against the wood, and the sound of the concussion reached my ear, though I was about fifty paces off. I supposed the man was dead; his face was bathed in blood; nevertheless, on recovering from the first stunning effect of the fall, this unfortunate savage, thus taken in the snare, rose; his visage, wherever the blood allowed it to be seen, had a frightful paleness, and he began to bellow like an ox. His horrible cries diminished my compassion; he seemed to me as nothing more than a brute, and I could not therefore feel for him as for one of my fellows. The louder the man howled the harder my heart grew; so true it is that the objects of our compassion must exhibit something of their proper dignity, ere we can deeply participate in their trouble. Pity is a sentiment of association, and who would mentally associate with that which he despises? They at length carried him off, although he continued to offer a desperate and protracted resistance. A small boat was brought alongside by other police agents; the prisoner was bound with cords, his hands were fastened behind his back, and he was thrown on his face into the boat. This second rude shock was followed by a shower of blows, nor did the torture here finish; the

sergeant who had seized the victim, no sooner saw him thus prostrate, than he jumped upon his body, and began to stamp upon him with all his force, trampling him under his feet as the grapes are trod in the wine-press. I had then approached the spot, and am therefore witness of all that I relate. During this horrible torture the frightful yells of the victim were at first redoubled, but when they began to grow fainter and fainter, I felt that I could no longer command myself, and, having no power to interfere, I hastened away.

What most disgusts me is the refined elegance which is exhibited in the same picture with such revolting barbarity. If there were less luxury and delicacy among the higher orders the condition of the lower would inspire me with less indignation. Such occurrences, with all that they involve, would make me hate the most delightful country in the world; how much more, then, a heath of plaster — a painted marsh!

"What exaggeration!" the Russians would say: "what strong expressions for so trifling a matter!!" I know you call it trifling, and it is that for which I reproach you. Your familiarity with these horrors explains your indifference without justifying it: you make no more account of the cords with which you bind a man, than of the collar which you put on your dog.

In broad daylight, in the open street, to beat a man to death before he is tried, appears a very simple matter in the eyes of the public and of the constables of Petersburg. Citizens, lords, and soldiers, the poor and the rich, the great and small, the polite and the

vulgar, the clowns and the fops, the Russians of every class consent to let such things quietly go on in their presence, without troubling themselves about their legality. Elsewhere, the citizen is protected by the whole community against the agent of unjust power; here, the public agent is protected against the just accusations of the injured individual. The serf never accuses.

The Emperor Nicholas has made a code! If the facts I have related are in accordance with the laws of this code so much the worse for the legislator; if they are illegal, so much the worse for the administrator of the law. The Emperor is, in both cases, responsible. What a misfortune to be no more than a man in accepting the office of a god, and yet to be forced to accept it! Absolute government should be confided only to angels.

I pledge myself to the accuracy of the facts that are here related. I have neither added nor retrenched one circumstance in the recital, and I recount it while the slightest features of the scene continue present to my mind.*

If such details could be published at Petersburg, with the commentaries indispensable to make them noticed by minds inured to all kinds of brutality and injustice, they would not effect the good that might be expected. The Russian administration would so order matters, that the police of Petersburg should henceforth seem to be more mild in its treatment of the people, were it only out of respect for the

* It may not be useless to repeat that this chapter, like almost all the others, was preserved and concealed with care during my sojourn in Russia.

squeamish sentiments of foreigners; but this would be all.

The manners of a people are gradually formed by the reciprocal action of the laws upon the customs, and of the customs upon the laws; they do not change as by the stroke of a wand. Those of the Russians, in spite of the pretensions of these half-savages, are, and will yet long remain cruel. It is little more than a century since they were true Tartars: it was Peter the Great who first compelled the men to admit females into their social meetings; and under all their modern elegance, several of these parvenus of civilisation still wear the bear skin.

Seeing that they can now no longer avail themselves of the age of chivalry — that age by whose spirit the nations of western Europe were so much benefited in their youth — all that can remain for the Russians is an independent and influential religion. Russia has a faith, but a political faith does not emancipate the human mind; it shuts it up in the narrow circle of its natural interests. With the Catholic faith the Russians would soon acquire general ideas, based on a rational course of instruction, and on a liberty proportioned to their state of enlightenment. Could they but obtain this elevation, I am persuaded that they might rule the world. The evil of their system is deeply seated, and the remedies hitherto employed have only acted upon the surface — they have healed the wound over without curing it. A genuine civilisation spreads from the centre to the circumference, that of Russia tends from the circumference towards the centre; it is a barbarism, plastered over, and nothing more.

Because a savage may have the vanity of a votary of fashion, does it follow that his mind is cultivated? I repeat, and may, perhaps, repeat again, that the Russians care much less for being civilised than for making us believe that they are civilised. So long as this public disease of vanity shall continue to prey upon their hearts and to corrupt their minds, they will have certain great lords who will be able to make a display of refinement both among themselves and us; but they will remain barbarians at heart. Unfortunately, however, savages understand the use of fire-arms.

The endeavours of the Emperor Nicholas justify my views. He has thought, before I did, that the time for the display of appearances is past in Russia, and that the entire edifice of civilisation in that land has to be reconstructed.

Peter the Great would have overthrown it a second time in order to rebuild it. Nicholas is more skilful. I am filled with respect for this man, who, with the whole energy of his mind, struggles in secret against the work of the genius of Peter the Great. While continuing to deify that mighty reformer, he is all the while bringing back to their proper position a nation led astray among the paths of imitation for upwards of a hundred years. The views of the present emperor manifest themselves even in the streets of Petersburg. He does not amuse himself with building, in haste, colonnades of stuccoed bricks; he is everywhere replacing appearance with reality; stone is everywhere superseding plaster, and fabrics of a strong and massive architecture are rising above the showy monuments of a false splendour. It is by first

bringing back a people to their primitive character, that they are rendered capable and worthy of true civilisation, without which a nation cannot know how to work for posterity. If a people would rear a monument to their own power and greatness, they must not copy foreigners — they must study to develope the national genius instead of thwarting it. That which in this creation most nearly approaches to Deity, is nature. Nature calls the Russians to great things, while they, under their pretended civilisation, have been occupied with trifles. The Emperor Nicholas has appreciated their capabilities better than his predecessors, and under his reign, by a general return to truth, everything is becoming great. In Petersburg stands a pillar, which is the largest piece of granite that has ever been cut by the hands of man, not excepting the Egyptian monuments. Seventy thousand soldiers, the court, the city, and the surrounding country, gathered together without inconvenience or pressure in the square of the imperial palace, to witness, in a religious silence, the miraculous erection of this monument, conceived, executed, and placed by a Frenchman, M. de Montferrand; for the French are still necessary to the Russians. The prodigious machines worked successfully, and at the moment when the column, rising from its fetters, lifted itself up as if animated with a life of its own, the army, the crowd, the emperor himself, fell on their knees to thank God for so great a miracle, and to praise him for the stupendous achievements which he permitted them to accomplish. This I call a real national fête; not a flattery that might, like the masquerade of Peterhoff, have been also taken for

a satire, but a grand historical picture. The great, the little, the bad, the sublime, and all other opposites, enter into the constitution of this singular country, while silence perpetuates the prodigy and prevents the machine from breaking.

The Emperor Nicholas extends his reforms even to the language of those who surround him; he requires Russian to be spoken at court. The greater number of the women of the highest circles, especially those who have been born at Petersburg, are ignorant of their native language; but they learn a few Russian phrases, which they utter through obedience to the emperor, when he passes into the saloons of the palace where their duties may retain them. One of them acts always as a sentinel, to announce to the others, by some conventional sign, the arrival of the monarch, on whose appearance French conversation immediately ceases, and Russian phrases, destined to flatter the imperial ear, are heard on every side. The prince observes, with self-complacency, the extent of his power as a reformer; and the fair rebels begin to laugh as soon as he has passed.

However, like every reformer, the Emperor is endowed with an obstinacy which must ultimately produce success.

At the extremity of that square, vast as a mighty region, in which stands the column, is to be seen a mountain of granite — the church of Saint Isaac, of Petersburg. This edifice, though less stately, less beautiful in design, and less rich in ornaments than that of St. Peter's at Rome, is quite as extraordinary. It is not finished, and one cannot therefore judge of the whole, which will be a work whose gigantic pro-

portions will far exceed those which the spirit of the age has produced among other nations. Its materials are granite, bronze, and iron, and no other. Its colour is imposing, though sombre.

This marvellous temple was commenced under Alexander, and will soon be completed under the reign of Nicholas, by the same Frenchman, (M. de Montferrand), who raised the column.

And such efforts for the benefit of a church crippled by the civil power! Alas! the word of God will never be heard under this roof. The temples of the Greek church no longer serve as roofs for the pulpits of truth. In scorn of the memories of the Athanasiuses and the Chrysostoms, religion is not taught publicly to the Russians. The Greek Muscovites suppress the word of preaching, unlike the Protestants, whose religion consists of nothing but that word.

The Emperor, aided by his armies of soldiers and of artists, exerts himself in vain. He will never invest the Greek church with a power which God has not given it: it may be rendered a persecuting, but it cannot be rendered an apostolical, church, — a church, that is to say which is a *civiliser*, and a conqueror in the moral world. To discipline men is not to convert souls. This political and national church has neither moral nor spiritual life: where independence is wanting, there can be nothing else that is good. Schism, in separating the priest from his independent head, immediately throws him into the hands of his temporal prince; and thus revolt is punished by slavery. In the most bloody periods of history, the Catholic church laboured to emancipate the

nations: the adulterous priest sold the God of heaven to the god of the world to enable him to tyrannise over men in the name of Christ; but this impious priest, while even he was killing the body enlightened the mind: for, altogether turned from the right way as he was, he nevertheless formed part of a church which possessed life and light: the Greek priest imparts neither life nor death, — he is himself a dead body.

Signs of the cross, salutations in the streets, bowing of the knees before the chapels, prostrations of old devotees upon the pavements of the churches, kissings of the hands, a wife, children, and universal contempt —such are the fruits of the priest's abdication —such is all that he has been able to obtain from the most superstitious people in the world. What a lesson! and what a punishment! In the midst of the triumph of his schism, the schismatic priest is struck with impotence. A priest, when he wishes to engross temporal power, perishes for the want of views sufficiently elevated to enable him to see the road that God has appointed for him; — a priest who allows himself to be dethroned by the king, for the want of courage to follow that road, equally fails in his high calling.

I cannot apologise for the wandering character of my thoughts and disquisitions, for, in passing freely from object to object, from idea to idea, I describe Russia as a whole, and show the truth as it appears to me, better than if, with a more methodical style, I purposely endeavoured to avoid the reproach of inconsistencies, digressions, or confusion of subjects. The state of the people, the greatness of the Em-

peror, the aspect of the streets, the beauty of the public buildings, the degraded state of minds consequent upon the degeneration of the religious principle, all struck my eyes at the same moment, and passed so to speak, at once under my pen; and all constitute Russia, the principles of whose life reveal themselves to my thoughts in the contemplation of objects the least significant in appearance.

Yesterday I walked out with a Frenchman, an intelligent person, well acquainted with Petersburg, where he resides as tutor in the family of a great nobleman. He has consequently opportunities for attaining a knowledge of the truth, entirely beyond the reach of passing travellers. He considered my views of Russia too favourable. I laugh at this reproach when I think of those which the Russians will make against me, and I maintain that I am impartial, seeing that I hate only that which appears to me evil, and that I admire all which appears good, in this, as in other lands.

This Frenchman passes his life among Russian aristocrats.

We were walking leisurely along the beautiful promenade of the Perspective Newski, when suddenly a black, or dark green coach passed before us. It was long, low-built, and closed on all sides, and much resembled an enormous coffin raised upon wheels. Four little apertures of about six inches square, crossed with iron bars, gave air and light to this moving tomb; a child of eight, or, at the most, ten years, guided the two horses attached to the machine; and, to my surprise, a considerable number of soldiers escorted it. I had scarcely time to ask my compa-

nion the uses of so singular an equipage, when my question was answered by a ghastly face, which appeared at one of the air holes, and at once informed me that this carriage served to transport prisoners to the place of their destination.

"It is the travelling cell of the Russians," said my companion; "elsewhere, no doubt, they have similar odious objects; but then they seek to hide them as much as they can from the public; here they make as much display of them as possible. What a government!"

"Think," I replied, "of the difficulties it has to encounter!"

"Ah! you are still the dupe of their gilded words. I see the Russian authorities impose upon you whatever they please."

"I endeavour to place myself as much as possible in their situation; nothing requires more candid consideration than the position of those who govern, for it is not they who have created the existing state of things; their business is to defend it even while prudently reforming it. If the iron rod which governs this debased people were to be removed but for one moment, society would be overturned."

"They tell you that; but, trust me, they delight in this pretended necessity. Those who most complain of the severities they are obliged, as they say, to put in force, would renounce them with regret. In the bottom of their hearts they love a government without check or counterpoise; such a government works more easily than any other. No man willingly gives up that which makes his task more easy. Could

you expect a preacher to dispense with the terrors of hell, in his efforts to convert hardened sinners? Hell is the capital punishment of the theologians*; at first they make use of it with regret, as of a necessary evil, but they soon acquire a taste for dealing out damnation upon the greater part of mankind. It is the same thing with severe measures in politics; they are feared before they are tried, but after their success is witnessed, they are admired; and such, you may depend upon it, is the feeling too general in this country. I often think that they take pleasure in creating circumstances, under which it is necessary to inflict punishment, for fear they should get out of practice. Are you ignorant of what is now passing on the Wolga?"

"I heard of serious troubles there, but they say that they were promptly repressed."

"No doubt: but at what price? And what should you say, were I to tell you that these frightful disorders were the result of a word of the Emperor's?"

"Never will you induce me to believe that he can have approved such horrors."

"Neither do I say he has. Nevertheless, a word pronounced by him — innocently, I believe, has caused the evil. The fact is as follows: notwithstanding the injustice of the overseers of the crown, the lot of the peasants of the Emperor is still preferable to that of other serfs; and whenever the sovereign becomes proprietor of some new domain, its inhabitants are the envy of all their neighbours. The

* I would beg the reader to remember that it is not I who thus speak.

crown lately purchased a considerable estate in the district that has since revolted. Immediately the peasants sent deputies from every part of the surrounding country to the new superintendants of the imperial lands, to supplicate the emperor to purchase them also. The serfs chosen as ambassadors were sent on to Petersburg. The Emperor received them and treated them with kindness; but, to their great regret, he did not buy them. 'I cannot,' he said to them, 'purchase all Russia, but a time will come, I hope, when each peasant of this empire will be free; if it depended only upon me, the Russians should enjoy from this day forth the independence which I wish for them; and to procure them which, at a future period, I am labouring with all my powers.'"

"Well, this answer seems to me full of reason, candour, and humanity."

"No doubt: but the emperor should have known to whom he addressed such words; and not have murdered his noblemen out of tenderness towards his serfs. These words, interpreted by barbarous and envious men, have set a whole province on fire; and thus has it become necessary to punish a people for crimes which they were instigated to commit. '*Our Father* desires our deliverance,' cried the returned deputies on the borders of the Wolga; 'he wishes for nothing but our happiness, he said so to us, himself: it is, then, only the nobles and their agents who are our enemies, and who oppose the good designs of *Our Father!* Let us avenge the Emperor!' After this, the peasants believed they were performing a pious work in rising upon their masters, and thus all the nobles of a canton, and all their agents were massacred together

with their families. They spitted one and roasted him alive; they boiled another in a cauldron; they disembowelled and killed in various other ways the stewards and agents of the estates; they murdered all they met, burnt whole towns, and, in short, devastated a province, not in the name of liberty, for they do not know what liberty means, but in the name of deliverance and of the emperor."

"It was perhaps some of these savages whom we saw passing in the prisoner's conveyance. How could such beings be influenced by the gentle means employed by the governments of Western Europe?"

"It would be necessary gradually to change the ideas of the people; instead of which they find it more convenient to change their location. After every scene of this kind, villages and entire cantons are transported. No population is sure of preserving its territory, the result of which is, that men, attached as they become to the soil, are deprived, in their slavery, of the only compensation which could comport with their condition. By an infernal combination they are made moveable, without being made free. A word from the monarch roots them up as though they were trees, tears them from their native soil, and sends them to perish or to languish at the world's end. The peasant, exposed to these storms of supreme power, loves not his cabin, the only thing in this world that he could love; he detests his life, and ill-understands its duties, for it is necessary to impart some happiness to a man in order to make him feel his obligations; misery only instructs him in hypocrisy and revolt. If self interest, when well understood, is not the foundation of morals, it is at least their support."

"Yet it is difficult to change the spirit of a people: it is the work neither of a day, nor of a reign."

"Is it a work at which they sincerely labour?"

"I think so, but with prudence."

"What you call prudence, I call insincerity: you do not know the emperor."

"Reproach him with being inflexible, but not with being false: in a prince, inflexibility is often a virtue."

"Do you believe the character of the emperor to be sincere? Remember his conduct at the death of Pouskine."

"I do not know the circumstances of that event."

Thus talking, we arrived at the Champ de Mars, a vast square which appears a desert, though it occupies the middle of the city. A man may converse there with less danger of being overheard than in his chamber. My cicerone continued: —

"Pouskine was, as you are aware, the greatest poet of Russia."

"We are no judges of that."

"We are, at least, of his reputation. Whether well founded or not, his reputation was great. He was yet young, and of an irascible temper. You know he had Moorish blood on his mother's side. His wife, a very handsome woman, inspired him with more passion than confidence. His poetical temperament and his African blood, made him easily jealous; and it was thus that, exasperated by appearances and by false reports envenomed with a perfidy which calls to mind the conception of Shakspeare, this Russian Othello lost all reason, and sought to force the man by whom he believed himself injured, to

fight with him. This person was a Frenchman, and, unfortunately, his brother-in-law; his name was M. de Antés. A duel in Russia is a serious affair, the more so, because, instead of according, as among us, with ideas and customs in opposition to laws, it militates against all preconceived notions: this nation is more oriental than chivalrous. Duelling is illegal here as elsewhere; but, besides this, it is less supported by public opinion than in other lands. M. de Antés did all he could to avoid the difficulty. Urged vehemently by the unhappy husband, he refused him satisfaction, though in a manner that was dignified: but notwithstanding this, he continued his assiduities. Pouskine became almost mad. The constant presence of the man whose death he wished, appeared to him a permanent insult, and in order to rid himself of him, he acted in a way that made a duel inevitable. The two brothers-in-law fought, and M. de Antés killed Pouskine. The man whom public opinion accused, triumphed; and the injured husband, the national poet, the innocent party, fell.

"This death excited public indignation. Pouskine, the Russian poet, *par excellence*, the author of the finest odes in the language, the glory of the country, the restorer of Slavonian poetry, in short, the pride of the age, the hope of the future, to fall by the hand of a Frenchman! this was an event that roused public passion to the highest pitch. Petersburg, Moscow, the whole empire was in excitement. The emperor, who knows the Russians better than any man in Russia, took care to join in the public affliction. He ordered a service to be performed, and I am not sure that he did not carry his pious affectation so far

as to assist in person at the ceremony, in order to publish his regret by taking God to witness his admiration of the national genius, removed too soon for his glory.

"However this may be, the sympathy of the sovereign so flattered the Muscovite spirit as to awake a generous patriotism in the breast of a young man, endowed with much talent. This too credulous poet was so enraptured by the august protection accorded to the first of all arts, that he grew bold enough to believe himself inspired! In the ingenuous yearnings of his gratitude, he ventured even to write an ode — a patriotic ode, to thank the emperor for becoming the protector of literature. He concluded his remarkable production by singing the praises of the departed bard. This was all he did; I have read the verses and I can attest the innocent intentions of the author: unless at least it might be a crime to conceal in the depths of his bosom a hope, perhaps, of becoming one day a second Pouskine — a hope very pardonable, it seems to me, in a youthful imagination.

"Audacious youth! to aim at renown, to betray a passion for glory under a despotism! It was the same as if Prometheus had said to Jupiter — 'Take care of yourself, I am going to rob you of your thunderbolts.'

"The recompense which this young aspirant received for having thus publicly shown his confidence in his master's love for the fine arts and the belles lettres, was a SECRET order to go and pursue his poetical studies on the Caucasus, a chapel of ease to the ancient Siberia.

"After having remained there two years, he has

returned, his health destroyed, his mind cast down, and his imagination radically cured of its chimeras. After this trait will you yet put trust in the official words or the public acts of the Emperor?"

"The Emperor is a man; he shares human weaknesses. Something must have shocked him in the allusions of the young poet. Perhaps they were European rather than national. The emperor proceeds on a principle the very opposite to that of Catherine II., he braves Europe instead of flattering it. This is wrong, I admit; for studied opposition is in itself a species of dependence, since under it a man is only influenced by contradiction; but it is pardonable, especially if you reflect on the evil caused to Russia by princes who were possessed all their life with the mania of imitation."

"You are incorrigible!" exclaimed the advocate of the ancient boyards. "You believe, then, in the possiblity of Russian civilisation? It promised well before the time of Peter the Great, but that prince destroyed the fruit in its germ. Go to Moscow, it is the centre of the ancient empire; yet you will see that all minds are turned towards speculations of industry, and that the national character is as much effaced there as at St. Petersburg. The Emperor Nicholas commits to-day, though with different views, a fault analogous to that of Peter the Great. He does not take into account the history of an entire age, the age of the Emperor Peter: history has its fatalities, — the fatalities of *faits accomplis*. Woe to the prince who does not submit to these!"

The day was advanced; we separated, and I continued my walk, musing upon the energetic feeling

of opposition which must spring up in minds accustomed to reflect under the silence of despotism. Characters which such a government does not debase, it steels and fortifies.

On my return, I sat down to read again some translations of the poems of Pouskine. They confirmed me in the opinion that a previous reading had imparted. This author has borrowed much of his colouring from the new poetical school of Western Europe. Not that he has adopted the anti-religious opinions of Lord Byron, the social notions of our poets, or the philosophy of those of Germany; but he has adopted their manner of describing. I therefore do not recognise him as a real Muscovite poet. The Pole, Mickiewitch, strikes me as being much more Slavonic, although he, like Pouskine, has bowed to the influence of occidental literature.

The real Russian poet, did one exist, could, in the present day address only the people; he would neither be understood nor read in the *salons*. Where there is no language, there is no poetry; neither indeed are there any thinkers. The Emperor Nicholas has begun to require that Russian be spoken at court; they laugh at present at a novelty which is viewed as merely a caprice of their master's; the next generation will thank him for this victory of good sense over fashion.

How could the national genius develope itself in a society where people speak four languages without knowing one? Originality of thought has a nearer connection than is imagined with purity of idiom. This fact has been forgotten in Russia for a century, and in France for some years. Our children will

feel the effects of the rage for English nurses which has, among us, taken possession of all "*fashionable*" mothers.*

In France formerly, the first, and I believe the best French tutor, was the nurse. A man should study his native language throughout his whole life, but the child should not be formally taught it; he should receive it in the cradle, without study. Instead of this, our little Frenchmen of the present day lisp English, and stammer German from their birth, and are afterwards taught French as a foreign language.

Montaigne congratulated himself on having learned Latin previously to French. It is perhaps to the advantage in which the author of the *Essays* thus glories, that we owe the most pure and national style in our ancient literature; he had a right to rejoice, for the Latin is the root of our language; but all purity and spontaneity of expression is lost among a people who do not respect the language of their fathers. Our children speak English, just as our footmen wear powder! I am persuaded that the want of originality in modern Slavonian literature is attributable to the custom, which the Poles and Russians adopted during the eighteenth century, of introducing into their families foreign tutors and preceptors. When the Russians turn their thoughts again into their own language, they translate; and this borrowed style checks the flow of thought, at the same time that it destroys the simplicity of expression.

How is it that the Chinese have hitherto done more for the human race in literature, in philosophy,

* Les mères *fashionables*.

in morals and in legislation than the Russians? It is, perhaps, because these men have not ceased to entertain a strong affection for their primitive dialect.

The confusion of languages does not injure mediocre minds; on the contrary, it aids them in their efforts. Superficial instruction, the only kind which is suited to such minds, is facilitated by a study, equally superficial, of the living languages—an easy study, or rather a mental recreation perfectly suited to indolent faculties, or to faculties devoted to material aims. But whenever, by mischance, this system is applied to the education of superior talent, it checks the work of nature, leads genius astray, and prepares for it either a future source of fruitless regrets,—or efforts which few even of the most distinguished men have the leisure or the courage, after the period of early youth is passed, to undertake. All great writers are not Rousseaus. Rousseau studied our language as a foreigner, and it would require his genius of expression and his susceptibility of imagination, joined to his tenacity of character, and also his isolation in society, in order to learn French as he learned it. Still the French of the Genevese is less at variance with that of Fénélon, than the jargon, mixed with English and German, which is now taught in Paris to the children of the highest classes. Perhaps the laboured artifices that too often appear in the sentences of Rousseau would not have existed, if the great writer had been born in France at a time when (as was then the case) the children spoke French.

The study of the ancient languages, then in vogue, far from being attended with a mischievous result,

afforded us the only means of attaining a profound knowledge of our own, which is derived from them. This study led us back to the pure waters of our source, and there strengthened our national genius, independently of its advantages as being the most appropriate to the developement of the faculties of childhood, into whose mind, before all else, should be instilled the power of language as the instrument of thought.

Whilst Russia, slowly regenerated by the sovereign who now governs her, from the errors entailed by former monarchs, may hope to attain a language, the poets, the prose writers, the refined and *soi-disant* enlightened people amongst ourselves, are preparing for France a generation of scribbling imitators, of readers without independence of mind; people who understand Shakspeare and Goëthe so well in the original, that they can neither appreciate the prose of Bossuet and of Chateaubriand, the winged poetry of Hugo, the classic periods of Racine, the originality and boldness of Molière and of La Fontaine, the refined wit and taste of Madame de Sévigné, nor the sentiment and the divine harmony of Lamartine! Thus it is that they will be rendered incapable of producing anything sufficiently original to perpetuate the glory of their language, and to attract, as formerly, the men of all countries to France, there to study and to appreciate the mysteries of taste.

CHAP. XVIII.

DISTURBANCES IN RUSSIA. — PARALLEL BETWEEN FRENCH AND RUSSIAN CRIMES AND CRUELTIES. — CHARACTERISTICS OF REVOLT IN RUSSIA. — ORDER IN DISORDER. — DANGER OF INCULCATING LIBERAL IDEAS AMONG IGNORANT POPULATIONS. — REASONS FOR RUSSIAN SUPERIORITY IN DIPLOMACY. — HISTORY OF THELENEF, A TALE OF MODERN RUSSIA.

This morning, early, I received a visit from the individual whose conversation is recounted in the last chapter. He brought me a French manuscript, written by the young prince, the son of his patron. It is the relation of an occurrence, only too true, that forms one of the numerous episodes of the yet recent event with which all feeling and thoughtful minds are still silently and secretly occupied. Is it possible to enjoy, without any feelings of uneasiness, the luxury of a magnificent abode, when one thinks that, at a few hundred leagues from the palace, murder is rampant, and society would fall to pieces, were it not for the terrific means employed to uphold it?

The young Prince ——, who has written this story, would be ruined if it could be discovered that he was the author. It is on this account that he has confided his manuscript to me, and entrusted me with its publication. He permits me to insert the account of the death of Thelenef in the text of my travels, where I shall faithfully give it, without, however, compromising the safety of any one. I am assured of the accu-

racy of the principal facts; the reader can put as much or as little faith in them as he pleases; for my own part, I always believe what people whom I do not know say to me. The suspicion of falsehold never enters my mind until after the proof.

The young Russian, who is the author of the fragment, wishing to justify, by the memory of the horrors of our revolution, the ferocity of his own countrymen, has cited an act of French cruelty, the massacre of M. de Belzunce at Caen. He might have increased his list: Mademoiselle de Sombreuil forced to drink a glass of blood to redeem the life of her father; the heroic death of the archbishop of Arles, and of his glorious companions in martyrdom, within the cloisters of the Carmelite convent at Paris; the massacres of Lyons; the executions, by drowning, at Nantes, surnamed by Carrier, the republican marriages; and many other atrocities which historians have not even recorded, might serve to prove that human ferocity only sleeps among nations even the most civilised. Nevertheless, there is a difference between the cold, methodical, and abiding cruelty of the Mugics, and the passing frenzy of the French. These latter, during the war which they carried on against God and humanity, were not in their natural state; the mood of blood had changed their character; and the extravagances of passion ruled over all their acts; for never were they less free than at the epoch when everything that was done among them was done in the name of liberty. We are, on the contrary, going to see the Russians murder each other without belying their characters; it is still a duty which they are performing.

Among this obedient people, the influence of social institutions is so great in every class—ideas and habits so rule over characters, that the fiercest excesses of vengeance still appear ruled by a certain degree of discipline. Murder is designed and executed in an orderly manner; no rage, no emotion, no words: a calm is preserved more terrible than the delirium of hate. They struggle with, overthrow, trample, and destroy each other, with the steady regularity of machines turning upon their pivots. This physical impassibility in the midst of scenes the most violent, this monstrous audacity in the conception and calmness in the execution, this silent passion and speechless fanaticism seem, if one might so express it, the innocence of crime. A certain order, contrary to nature, presides in this strange country over the most monstrous excesses; tyranny and revolt march in step, and perform their movements in unison.

As everything is in sympathetic accord, the immense extent of the territory does not prevent things being executed from one end of Russia to the other, with a punctuality, and a simultaneous correspondence, which is magical. If ever they should succeed in creating a REAL revolution among the Russian people, massacre would be performed with the regularity that marks the evolutions of a regiment. Villages would change into barracks, and organised murder would stalk forth armed from the cottages, form in line, and advance in order; in short, the Russians would prepare for pillage from Smolensk to Irkutsk, as they march to the parade in Petersburg. From so much uniformity, there results between the natural dispositions and the social habits of the people,

a harmony, the effects of which might become prodigious in good as in evil.

Everything is obscure in the future prospects of the world; but, assuredly, it will see strange scenes enacted before the nations by this predestined people.*

It is almost always under the influence of a blind respect for power, that the Russians disturb public order. Thus, if we are to believe what is repeated in secret, had it not been for the emperor's speech to the deputies of the peasants, the latter would not have taken up arms.

I trust that this fact, and those that I have elsewhere cited, will show the danger of inculcating liberal opinions among a population so ill-prepared to receive them. As regards political liberty, the more we love it, the greater care should we take to avoid pronouncing its name before those who would only compromise a holy cause by their manner of defending it. It is this which induces me to doubt of the truth of the imprudent reply attributed to the emperor. That prince knows, better than any one, the character of his people, and I cannot believe that he could have provoked the revolt of the peasants, even unwittingly.

The horrors of the insurrection are described by the author of Thelenef, with an accuracy the more

* There will be some readers who can scarcely read this and similar prophecies in the present work, without being reminded of the great northern nation of more inspired prophecy, the chief prince of Meshech (whence the word Muscovite is generally derived,) who, with all his bands, and with numerous Asiatic allies, is to devastate the Levant and Syria at some period that has yet to come.—*Trans.*

scrupulous, as the principal incident occurred in the family of the narrator.

If he have allowed himself to ennoble the character and the passion of his hero and heroine, it is because he has a poetical imagination; but while embellishing the sentiments, he has preserved the picture of national manners: in short, neither in the facts, the sentiments, nor the descriptions, does this little romance appear to me misplaced in the midst of a work, all the merit of which consists in the verisimilitude of its delineations.

I may add that the bloody scenes are yet being daily renewed in various parts of the same country where public order has been disturbed, and re-established in so terrific a manner. The Russians have no right to reproach France for her political disorders, and to draw from them consequences favourable to despotism. Let but the liberty of the press be accorded to Russia for twenty-four hours, and we should learn things that would make us recoil with horror. Silence is indispensable to oppression. Under an absolute government every indiscretion of speech is equivalent to a crime of high treason.

If there are found among the Russians, better diplomatists than among nations the most advanced in civilisation, it is because our journals inform them of every thing which is done or projected among ourselves, and because, instead of prudently disguising our weaknesses, we display them, with passion, every morning; whilst, on the contrary, the Byzantine policy of the Russians, working in the dark, carefully conceals from us everything that is thought, done, or feared among them. We march exposed on all

sides, they advance under cover. The ignorance in which they leave us blinds our view; our sincerity enlightens theirs; we suffer from all the evils of idle talking, they have all the advantages of secrecy; and herein lies all their skill and ability.

THE HISTORY OF THELENEF.

THE estates of Prince —— had been for several years managed by a steward, named Thelenef. The prince, occupied with other matters, seldom thought of his domains. Disappointed in his ambitious views, he had travelled for a long time, in the hope of dissipating his chagrin as a disgraced courtier. At length, weary of seeking from the arts and from nature, consolation for his failure in politics, he returned to his own country, in order again to approach the court, and to endeavour by dint of care and diligence to recover the favour of the sovereign.

But while fruitlessly wasting his life and fortune in playing by turns the courtier at Petersburg, and the virtuoso in Southern Europe, he lost the attachment of his peasants, exasperated by the ill-usage of Thelenef. This man ruled as a king in the extensive estates of Vologda, where his manner of exercising the lordly authority made him generally execrated.

Thelenef had, however, a charming daughter, called

* I have purposely changed the names of the persons and places, with the especial object of disguising the true ones; and I have also taken the liberty of correcting, in the style, a few expressions foreign to the genius of our language.

Xenie:* The amiability of this young person was an inborn virtue; for, having early lost her mother, she had received no other education than that which her father could give her. He taught her French, and she learned, as it were by heart, some of the classics of the age of Louis XIV.; which had been left in the castle of Vologda by the father of the Prince. The Bible, the "Thoughts of Pascal," and Telemachus were her favourite books. When but a small number of authors are read, when those authors are well chosen, and when their works are often re-perused, reading becomes very profitable. One of the causes of the frivolity of modern minds is the number of books badly read, rather than badly written, with which the world is inundated.

It would be rendering a service to the rising generation to teach them how to read, an acquirement which has become more rare since every one has learned how to write.

Thanks to her reputation for learning, Xenie, at the age of nineteen, enjoyed a well-merited influence throughout the whole government of ——. People came to consult her from all the neighbouring villages. In sickness, in disputes, in all the grievances of the poor peasants, Xenie was their guide and their support.

Her conciliating temper often brought upon her the rebukes of her father; but the knowledge of having done some good, or prevented some evil, compensated for every thing. In a country where, in general, women have little influence, she exercised a power

* This pretty name is that of a Russian saintess.

which no man in the district could dispute with her, the power of reason over brutish minds.

Even her father, violent as he was both by disposition and habit, felt the influence of her benevolent nature, and too often blushed to find himself checking the violence of his wrath through fear of giving pain to Xenie. Like a tyrannical prince, he blamed himself for his clemency, and accused himself of being too easy. He gloried in his angry passions, to which he gave the title of justice: the serfs of Prince —— called them by another name.

The father and daughter resided in the castle of Vologda, which was situated in a widely extended plain, whose scenery, for Russia, is very pastoral. The castle was built on the border of a lake, which surrounded it on three sides. This lake, whose banks are flat, communicates with the Volga by several tributary streams, which, in their short and gentle course, wind through the plain, deeply embedded in the soil, and are discoverable to the eye from afar, only by the lines of stunted willows and other sickly shrubs growing here and there along their borders. They intersect the prairie in every direction, without beautifying or enriching it; for the flowing water does not improve the marshy soil.

The appearance of the mansion had a certain air of grandeur. From the windows of one side the eye stretched over the lake, which reminds one of the sea, for its even and dark edges disappear, morning and evening, in the mists of the horizon; from those of the other side, over vast pastures, intersected by ditches, and abounding with osiers. In these pastures, which are never mown, consist the chief riches

of the country, and the care bestowed in the rearing of the cattle which roam over them at large, forms the sole occupation of the peasants.

Numerous herds and flocks, whose diminutive size and feeble frames evince the severity of the climate, feed on the banks of the lake of Vologda, and form the only enlivening objects in the scene. Such landscapes are destitute of real beauty; nevertheless they have a tranquil, indistinct, and dreamy kind of grandeur, whose deep repose lacks neither sublimity nor poetry: it is the east without the sun.

One morning, Xenie went out with her father to assist in numbering the cattle, an operation which he himself performed every day. The herds, picturesquely grouped at different distances before the castle, animated the green banks of the lake, which were brightened by the rays of the rising sun, whilst the bell of a neighbouring chapel was summoning to morning prayer some infirm, and therefore unemployed women, and several decayed old men, who enjoyed with resignation the repose of age.

The noble form of these hoary heads, the still fresh complexion of faces, whose brows were silvered with age, demonstrate the salubrity of the atmosphere, and evidence the beauty of the human race in this frozen zone. It is not to youthful countenances we must look, when we would know if beauty exists in a country.

"Look, my father," said Xenie, as she crossed the causeway which formed the isthmus that united the peninsula of the castle to the plain; "look at the flag floating over the cabin of my foster-brother."

The Russian peasants are frequently permitted to leave home, in order to exercise their industry in the neighbouring towns, and sometimes even as far off as St. Petersburg. On such occasions they pay to their masters a rent or fine, and only what they gain beyond this is their own. When one of these travelling serfs returns home to his wife, a pine, like a mast, is raised above the cabin, and a flag flutters on the top as a signal to the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, in order that when they see the joyful sign, they may sympathise with the happiness of the wife.

It was in accordance with this ancient custom that they had raised the streamer upon the pinnacle of the Pacome's cottage. The aged Elizabeth, the mother of Fedor, had been the nurse of Xenie.

"He has returned then, this good-for-nothing foster-brother of thine," replied Thelenef.

"Oh! I am so glad he has," said Xenie.

"One knave more in the district," muttered Thelenef, "we have already enough of them;" and the face of the steward, always gloomy, assumed a yet more forbidding expression.

"It would be easy to make him good;" replied Xenie; "but you will not exert your power."

"It is you who prevent me: you interfere with the duties of a master, by your soft ways and counsels of false prudence. Ah! it was not in this manner that my father and grandfather ruled the serfs of our lord's father."

"But you forget," replied Xenie, with a trembling voice, "that Fedor was from his childhood more gently brought up than other peasants; how can he

be like them? His education was from the first as much cared for as mine."

"He ought to be so much the better, and he is all the worse; such are the effects of education; but it is your fault, you and your nurse would constantly bring him to the castle, and I in my kind wish to please you, forgot, and allowed him to forget, that he was not born to live with us."

"You cruelly reminded him of it afterwards," answered Xenie, with a sigh.

"Your ideas are not Russian: sooner or later, you will learn to your cost, to know how peasants must be governed." He then continued, muttering between his teeth, "What is this devil of a Fedor doing, to come back here, after my letters to the prince. The prince cannot have read them, and the steward down there is jealous of me!"

Xenie heard the self-communings of Thelenef, and anxiously watched the progress of the resentful feelings of the steward, who considered that he had been braved in his own house by an intractable serf. She hoped to appease him by these reasonable words: —

"It is now two years since you had my poor foster-brother almost beaten to death. What have you gained by your severity? Nothing; his lips did not utter one word of excuse, he would have expired under the torture, rather than have humbled himself before you: for he knew that his punishment was too severe for his fault. I confess he had disobeyed you, but he was in love with Catharine. The cause of the offence lessened its importance; this you would not take into consideration. Since that scene, and the marriage and departure which followed it, the hatred

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of all our peasants has become so intense, that I fear for you, my father."

"And therefore you rejoice at the return of one of my most formidable enemies," replied the exasperated Thelenef.

"Ah! I do not fear him: we have both sucked the same breast; he would die rather than make me unhappy."

"He has given good proof of this truly; he would be the first to murder me if he dared."

"You judge him too harshly. Fedor would, I am sure, defend you against them all, even though you have deeply offended him: you remember your severity too well yourself, for him to forget it. Is not this the truth, father? He is now married, and his wife has already a little one; this domestic happiness will soften his character. The birth of children often changes the hearts of husbands."

"Silence! You will deprive me of all sense with your romantic notions. Go and read in your books about affectionate peasants and generous slaves. I know better than you do, the men I have to deal with: they are idle and vindictive like their fathers, and you will never change them."

"If you would permit me to act, and would give me your aid, we might, together, reform them; but here comes my good Elizabeth, returning from mass."

Thus speaking, Xenie ran to throw her arms around her nurse. "Now then you are happy!"

"Perhaps," replied the old woman, in a low voice.

"He is come back."

"Not for long, I fear."

"What do you mean?"

"They have all lost their senses; but, hush!"

"Well, Mother Pacome," said Thelenef, casting a sinister glance upon the old woman, "your good-for-nothing son has returned to you; his wife, I suppose, is satisfied; his return will prove to you and all, that I do not wish him ill."

"I am glad of it, sir, we need your protection; the prince is coming, and we do not know him."

"How! What!—the prince our master?" then checking himself, "doubtless," exclaimed Thelenef, much surprised, but not wishing to seem ignorant of what a peasant appeared to know, "doubtless I will protect you; but he will not be here so soon as you think: the report of his coming is current every year at this season."

"Pardon me, sir, he will be here shortly."

The steward longed to question the nurse more closely, but his dignity restrained him. Xenie saw his embarrassment, and came to his help.

"Tell me, nurse, how have you become so well acquainted with the intentions and movements of our lord the Prince?"

"I learned it from Fedor. Oh, my son knows many other things besides. He is now a man—he is twenty-one years old, just a year older than you, my pretty lady. I would say, if I dare, for he is so handsome—I would say you are like each other."

"Hold thy tongue! old doter; how should my daughter resemble thy son?"

"They have sucked the same milk, and even—but, no—when you are no longer our master I will tell you what I think of them."

"When I am no longer your master!"

"Certainly. My son has seen *the Father*."

"The Emperor?"

"Yes; and the Emperor himself has sent us word that we are going to be made free. It is his will; and if it depended only on him it would be done."

Thelenef shrugged his shoulders, and asked—"How has Fedor been able to speak to the Emperor?"

"How? He was one of those who were sent by all the people of the district and of the neighbouring villages, to go and ask our Father"——here Mother Pacome suddenly stopped short.

"To ask what?"

The old woman, who began; a little too late, to perceive her indiscretion, took refuge in obstinate silence, notwithstanding the hasty questions of the steward. This abrupt silence had something about it that was unusual, and at the same time significative.

"Once for all, what is it that you are plotting here against us?" cried the furious Thelenef, seizing the old woman by her shoulders.

"It is easy to guess," said Xenie, advancing between her father and her nurse. "You know that the Emperor bought, last year, the domain of ——, which adjoins ours. Since then our peasants dream of nothing but the happiness of belonging to the crown. They envy their neighbours, whose condition, as they believe, has become much improved, though, before, it was similar to theirs. Do not you remember that many of the old men of our district have, under various pretexts, asked your permission to travel. I was told, after their departure, that they had been chosen as deputies by the other serfs to go and entreat the Emperor to purchase them, as he had

done their neighbours. Various of the surrounding districts united with Vologda to present a similar request to his majesty. They say that they offered him all the money necessary to buy the domain of the Prince — both the men and the land."

"It is all true," said the old woman; "and my son, Fedor, who met them at Petersburg, went with them to speak to our Father; they all came back together yesterday."

"If I did not tell you of this attempt," said Xenie, looking at her amazed father, "it was because I knew that it would end in nothing."

"You have deceived yourself, if they have seen the Father."

"The *Father* himself could not do what they wished; he cannot buy all Russia."

"Do you perceive their cunning!" continued Thelenef. "The knaves are rich enough to offer large presents to the Emperor, and yet, with us, they are beggars. They are not ashamed to say that we spoil them of every thing; whereas, if we had more sense and less mildness, we should strip them even to the very girdle with which they would strangle us."

"You will not have the time to do that, Mister Steward," said, in a very low and gentle voice, a young man who had approached unperceived, and who stood with his hat in his hand, before a bush of osiers, from the midst of which he seemed to come as if by enchantment. "Ah! is it you, you villain?" cried Thelenef.

"Fedor, you say nothing to your foster-sister," interrupted Xenie, "you had so often promised not to forget me. I have kept my word better than you.

for I have not omitted a single day to mention your name in my prayer there, in that chapel, before the image of St. Wladimir, which reminded me of your departure. Do you remember it? It was there that you bade me adieu, now nearly a year ago."

In concluding these words, she cast on her brother a look of tenderness and reproach, the mingled softness and severity of which made a great impression.

"I forget you!" cried the young man, lifting his eyes to heaven. Xenie was silent, awed by the religious, yet somewhat fierce expression of an eye that was generally cast down.

Xenie was one of those beauties of the north that are never seen in other lands. Scarcely did she appear to belong to earth. The purity of her features, which reminded one of the pictures of Raphael, might have appeared cold had not a most delicate expression of sensibility softly shadowed her countenance, which, as yet, no passion had ever ruffled. At the age of twenty, which she had attained that very day, she was ignorant of all that agitates the heart. She was tall, and her slender form displayed unusual grace, although the habitual quiet of her movements concealed its natural pliancy. Her languor possessed a charm which belongs only to the women of her country, who are rather lovely than pretty, and perfectly lovely when they are so at all, which, however, they rarely are among the inferior classes, for, in Russia, there is aristocracy in beauty: the peasants are, in general, much less gifted by nature than the great ladies. Xenie had the beauty of a queen and the freshness of a village maiden. Her hair was parted in bands on a high and ivory

forehead; her blue eyes, fringed with long black lashes, which cast a shadow on her fresh yet scarcely coloured cheeks, were transparent as a fountain of limpid water; her eyebrows, perfectly, though delicately pencilled, were of a darker shade than her hair; her mouth, of the usual size, displayed teeth so white as to irradiate the whole countenance: her rosy lips were bright with the bloom of innocence; her face, though rather round, possessed much nobleness, and her expression embodied a delicacy of sentiment and a religious tenderness, with the charm of which it was, at the first glance, impossible not to sympathise. She needed only the silver glory to form one of the most lovely of those Byzantine madonnas, with which it is not permitted to adorn the churches.*

Her foster-brother was one of the handsomest men of a part of the empire renowned for the tall and elegant forms, the healthful appearance, and the carelessly graceful air of its inhabitants. The serfs of this portion of the empire are, unquestionably, the men who least need pity in Russia.

The elegant costume of the peasants became him admirably. His light hair, gracefully parted, fell in silky ringlets on either side of the face, the form of which was a perfect oval. His large and powerful neck remained bare, owing to the locks being cut off

* The use of images is always forbidden to a certain point in the Greek church, in which, the true believers admit only those of a particular conventional style, covered with various gold and silver ornaments, under which the merit of the work is entirely lost. — *Note by the Author of the Travels.*

close behind; whilst a band, in the form of a diadem, was fastened across the white forehead of the young labourer, keeping his hair close and smooth on the crown of his head, which shone, in the sun, like a Christ of Guido.

He wore a species of shirt of finely-striped coloured stuff, cut close to the neck, with an opening at the side, only just large enough for the head to pass through, and which was fastened by two buttons, between the shoulder and collar-bone. This garb of the Russian peasant, which reminds one of the Greek tunic, falls outside the pantaloon, and conceals it above the knee. It would somewhat resemble the French blouse, if it were not so infinitely more graceful, both as regards the manner in which it is cut, and the unstudied taste with which it is worn. Fedor possessed a naturally-elegant figure, his movements were easy, his head, finely placed on shoulders modelled like those of ancient statues, would have naturally assumed the most noble bearing, but the young man held it almost always sunk upon his breast. A secret mental dejection was painted on his beautiful countenance. With a Grecian profile, eyes of a bright blue, but sparkling with youth and natural intelligence, a curled and haughty mouth (like those seen on ancient medals) surmounted with a small brightly-golden moustache; with a youthful beard of the same colour, short curled, silky, and already thick, though scarcely changed from the down of boyhood; with the muscular power of the gladiator combined with the agility of the Spanish matador and the fair complexion of the north — with all these and every other external endowment that could render a man proud and self-confident, Fedor, humbled by an

education superior to the rank he occupied in his country, and perhaps also by the instinct of his natural dignity, which contrasted with his abject condition, maintained almost always the posture of a condemned man, about to receive sentence.

He had adopted this doleful attitude when nineteen years old, on the day that he underwent the punishment commanded by Thelenef, under the pretext that the young man — the foster-brother of his daughter, and hitherto his favourite, his spoiled child, had neglected to obey I know not what unimportant order. The real and serious motive for the barbarity, which was not the effect of a simple caprice, will be seen hereafter. Xenie imagined she had guessed the nature of the fault which had become so fatal to her brother. She imagined that Fedor was in love with Catharine, a young and handsome peasant girl who lived in the neighbourhood; and, as soon as the unfortunate young man had been cured of his wounds, which was not until after some weeks, for the punishment had been cruelly severe, she busied herself with repairing the evil, so far as lay in her power. She thought that the only means to achieve this would be to marry him to the young girl with whom she believed him smitten. No sooner had the project been announced by Xenie, than the hatred of Thelenef appeared to diminish. The marriage was brought about and celebrated in all haste, to the great satisfaction of Xenie, who believed that Fedor would lose in the happiness of the heart, his feelings of profound grief and resentment. She deceived herself; nothing could console her brother. She alone was aware of the bitter sense of shame with which he was overwhelmed;

she was his confidant, although he had confided nothing to her, for he never once complained. Indeed, the treatment of which he had been the victim was a matter of such ordinary occurrence, that no one attached any importance to it: except himself and Xenie no one thought any thing about it.

He avoided, with an admirable instinct of pride, every thing that could remind him of the degradation he had suffered; but he fled, involuntarily and with a shudder, whenever any of his comrades were about to be beaten; and he grew pale at the sight of a reed or a wand in a man's hand.

It should be repeated that he had commenced life too happily. Favoured by the steward, and, therefore, indulgently treated by all his superiors, envied by his comrades; talked of as the most fortunate, as well as the most handsome among the men born on the estate of Prince ——; idolised by his mother, ennobled in his own estimation by the delicate and ingenuous friendship of the lovely Xenie, an angel who called him her brother, he had not been duly prepared for the hardships of his lot; and in one day he discovered all his misery. Thenceforward he viewed the obligations of his condition as unjust: lowered in the eyes of men, and yet more in his own, from the most happy he became in a moment the most wretched of beings. What should console him for so much happiness vanished for ever under the rod of the Russian lictor! Affection for a wife! — could that restore the peace of this haughty slave? — No! his past happiness pursued him everywhere, and rendered his sense of shame the more insupportable. His sister Xenie believed she should render him again

happy by procuring his marriage: he obeyed, but this compliance only served to increase his wretchedness; for the man who seeks to become virtuous by taking upon himself additional duties, does but lay open new sources of remorse.

The unhappy Fedor felt when it was too late, that, notwithstanding her friendship, Xenie had done nothing for him. Unable to bear life in the scenes that had witnessed his degradation, he abandoned his native village, his wife, and his guardian angel.

His wife felt herself humbled, but from another cause. A wife blushes for shame when her husband is not happy. Under this feeling she forebore telling him that she was *enceinte*. She did not wish to employ such a means for retaining near her, a husband to whose happiness she could not minister.

At length, after a year's absence, he returned. He again beheld his mother and his wife, and found also an infant in the cradle, a little angel who resembled him, but who could not cure the sorrow which preyed upon his heart. He remained motionless and silent even before his sister Xenie, whom now he only dared to call mademoiselle. * * * * *

Their noble forms, which, according to the saying of the nurse, had, as well as their characters, some traits of resemblance, shone in the morning sun among the scattered groups of animals, of whom they seemed the sovereigns. One might have imagined the picture, an Adam and Eve, painted by Albert Durer. Xenie was calm, though joyful; but the countenance of the young man betrayed violent emotions, ill-disguised under an affected impassibility.

Xenie, in spite of her unerring womanly instinct,

was deceived this time by the silence of Fedor. She attributed the chagrin of her brother to painful recollections, and fancied that the sight of the scenes where he had suffered, tended to revive his grief; but she still depended on love and friendship to complete the cure of his wound.

On parting with her brother she promised often to come and see him in the cabin of her nurse.

Nevertheless, the last look of Fedor terrified the young maiden; there was something more than grief in this glance; there was the expression of a ferocious joy, blended with some unaccountable solicitude. A fear crossed her mind that he had become mad.

Madness had always inspired her with a terror which appeared to her supernatural, and as she attributed this fear to a presentiment, her superstition augmented her inquietude. When fears assume the shape of prophetic intimations, their influence becomes indomitable, a vague and fugitive presentiment takes the aspect of an impending destiny, and imagination, thus acted upon, creates what it fears, and by its influence upon intermediate events, realises its own chimeras.

Several days passed on, during which Thelenef frequently absented himself. Xenie, entirely absorbed in the grief which was caused by the incurable melancholy of Fedor, thought only of him, and saw only her nurse.

One evening, she was sitting reading in the castle, which her father had left in the morning, saying that she was not to expect his return before the morrow: Xenie was accustomed to these journeyings; for the extent of the domains which her father superintended

often obliged him to be absent for a considerable time. While thus alone, the nurse of the young girl suddenly appeared before her.

"What can you want with me so late?" asked Xenie.

"Come and take your tea with us; I have made it ready for you," replied the nurse.*

"I am not accustomed to go out at such an hour."

"You must, however, to-day. Come, what should you fear with me?"

Xenie, accustomed to the taciturnity of the Russian peasants, imagined that her nurse had prepared some surprise for her. She therefore rose and followed the old woman.

The village was deserted. At first Xenie believed that it only slept. The night was perfectly calm, and not dark: not a breath of wind disturbed the willows of the marsh, nor bent the long grass of the meadows; not a cloud veiled the stars of heaven. Neither the distant barking of the dog, nor the bleating of the sheep was to be heard; the cattle had ceased to low in the stall; the herdsman was no longer heard to chaunt his melancholy song, similar to the low trill which precedes the cadence of the nightingale; a silence more profound than the usual silence of the night, brooded over the plain, and weighed upon the heart of Xenie, who began to experience indefinable

* The poorest Russians possess a teapot and a copper kettle, and drink tea morning and evening in log huts, whose crevices are stuffed with moss, and whose extremely rude appearance contrasts strangely with the elegance and delicacy of the beverage on which they regale. — *Note of the Author of the Travels.*

sensations of terror, though she did not dare to hazard a question. Has the angel of death passed over Vologda? Such was the silent thought of the trembling girl.

Suddenly a blaze of light appeared on the horizon.

"What is that?" cried Xenie, struck with terror.

"I cannot tell," replied the nurse, "it is perhaps the last beams of day."

"No," replied Xenie, "it is a burning village!"

"A castle," responded Elizabeth, in a hollow voice; "it is the nobles' turn now."

"What do you mean?" cried Xenie, seizing in her terror, her nurse's arm, "are the dreadful predictions of my father going to be fulfilled?"

"Let us make haste; I have to conduct you further than our cabin."

"Where are you going to take me?"

"To a place of safety; there is no longer one for you in Vologda."

"But my father! — what has become of him? I have nothing to fear for myself; but where is my father?"

"He is saved."

"Saved! From what danger? By whom? What is it that you know? You are trying to soothe me to make me comply with your wishes!"

"I swear to you by the light of the Holy Spirit, my son has concealed him, and he has done it for your sake, at the peril of his own life; for all the traitors will perish this night."

"Fedor has saved my father! What generous conduct!"

"I am not generous, mademoiselle," said the young

man, approaching to support Xenie, who seemed about to faint.

Fedor had accompanied his mother to the castle gate, which he had not ventured to enter: on the two women coming forth, he had followed them at a little distance in order to protect the flight of Xenie. The weakness that came over his sister obliged him to show himself. But she soon recovered the energy which danger arouses in strong minds.

"Fedor, explain to me all this mystery. What is going to be done?"

"The Russians are free, and they are going to avenge themselves; but make haste, and follow me," he continued, leading her on.

"Going to avenge themselves! But on whom? I have never done evil to any one!"

"'Tis true, you are an angel; yet I fear that in the first moment there will be no mercy for anybody. The madmen! they see only enemies, not alone in our former masters but in all their kindred. The hour of carnage is arrived: let us make haste. If you do not hear the tocsin, it is because they avoid sounding the bells for fear of forewarning our enemies; besides, they could not be heard far enough: it was agreed that the last glimmer of the evening sun should be the signal for the burning of the castles, and the massacre of all their inhabitants."

"Oh! you make me shudder!"

Fedor continued, still urging her forwards, "I was appointed to march with the youngest and bravest of our people on the town of ——, where we are to surprise the garrison, which consists only of a few veterans. We are the strongest, and I therefore

thought they might dispense with me in the first expedition; thus I have wittingly failed in my duty, I have betrayed the sacred cause, and deserted my battalion to repair to the spot where I knew that I should find your father; he has been timely warned, and is concealed in a cabin dependent on the domains of the crown. But now I tremble lest it should be too late to save you," he continued, still hurrying her forward towards the retreat he had chosen for her. "The desire of protecting your father has lost time precious to yourself; but I thought to fulfil your wishes, and believed that you would not reproach me for the delay, when you knew the cause; besides, you are less exposed than Thelenef: we shall, I trust, yet save you."

"Yes; but you — you are lost," said the mother in a tone of anguish, which her endeavour to keep silent rendered the more impressive,

"Lost!" interrupted Xenie, "my brother lost for my sake!"

"Has he not deserted his ranks in the hour of danger?" replied the old woman, "he is guilty, and they will kill him."

"I have deserved death!"

"And I shall be the cause," cried Xenie; "no, no, you must fly — we will fly together."

"Never!"

During the precipitate retreat of the fugitives, the light of the conflagration silently spread in the horizon: not one cry, no sound of fire-arms, no ringing of bells, betrayed the insurrection. It was dumb massacre. The calm accord of nature, the beauty of the night smiling on so many murders, filled the soul

with horror. It seemed as though Providence, in order to punish men, had removed even her frown, and was suffering them to act as they pleased.

"You will not abandon your sister?" Xenie ejaculated, trembling with terror.

"No, mademoiselle: but once assured of your safety, I will go and surrender myself."

"I will go with you," replied the young girl, pressing his arm convulsively: "I will not leave you! You think, then, that I would sacrifice anything for life!"

At this moment the fugitives saw, by the light of the stars, defiling before them, at the distance of about a hundred paces, a line of silent shadows. Fedor stopped.

"Who are they?" asked Xenie, in a low voice.

"Hush!" said Fedor, gently retreating beneath the shadow cast by some palings; then, when the last phantom had crossed the route, he continued —

"It is a detachment of our people marching in silence to surprise the castle of Count ——. We are in danger here; let us hasten."

"Whither then will you conduct me?"

"In the first place, to my mother's brother, four versts* from Vologda. My old uncle is in his second childhood, he will not betray us. There you must change your dress, for that which you wear would cause you to be recognised; here is another. My mother will remain with her brother, and I hope before the close of the night to bring you to the re-

* A verst is about a quarter of a French league.

treat where I left Thelenef. No place is safe in our unfortunate district, but that is, at least, the safest."

"You will restore me to my father! Thank you, Fedor: but what will you yourself do then?"

"I will bid you adieu."

"Never!"

"Nay, nay, Xenie is right; you must remain with them," cried the poor mother.

"Thelenef would not suffer me," replied the young man, bitterly.

Xenie felt that it was not the moment to answer. The three fugitives pursuing their way in silence, and without accident, at length reached the door of the aged peasant.

It was fastened only with a latch. The old man slept, wrapped in a black sheepskin, and stretched on one of the rustic benches, which were ranged, like a divan, around the room. Over his head burnt a little lamp, suspended before a Greek Madonna, almost entirely concealed by the silver ornaments of her head and garments. A kettle full of hot water, a tea pot, and several cups, remained on the table. A short time before the arrival of the party, the wife of Fedor had quitted the cottage, to seek, with her child, shelter at her father's. Fedor appeared neither surprised nor vexed at her departure; for he had not told her to wait for him, and he wished the retreat of Xenie to be unknown to the whole world.

After lighting a lamp at that of the Virgin's, he led his mother and foster-sister to a small dark closet, which formed a loft over the room before mentioned. All the houses of the Russian peasants are similar in construction.

Left alone, Fedor seated himself on the first step of the frail staircase which his sister had ascended, resting his head upon his hands, in pensive thought.

Scarcely had Xenie, whom he had urged to use all haste, opened the packet that contained her new habiliments, than the young man, rising with an expression of intense anxiety, whistled softly to summon his mother.

"What is the matter?" she asked in a low voice.

"Extinguish your lamp — I hear steps; and the light will be seen through the chinks. Above all, avoid making the least noise."

The light was put out, and everything remained in silence.

A few moments past in an agonising suspense; at length the door opened (Xenie scarcely breathed for terror), and a man entered covered with sweat and blood. "Is it you, brother Basil?" said Fedor, advancing towards the stranger: "are you alone?"

"No; a detachment of our men wait for me before the door. No light?"

"I will get you one," replied Fedor, mounting the steps of the loft, whence he descended in an instant to re-kindle the lamp; which he had taken from the hands of the trembling women, at that which glimmered before the Madonna. "Would you like some tea, brother?"

"Yes."

"Here is some."

The new comer began to empty, by small draughts, the cup which Fedor presented. This man bore a token of command upon his breast. He was dressed as the other peasants, and armed with a naked and

bloody sabre; his thick and reddish beard imparted a roughness to his face that by no means tempered the glance of his eye, which resembled that of a wild animal. This glance, which cannot remain fixed on any thing, is frequent among the Russians, except when they are utterly brutalised by slavery, and then the eye is vacant, and has no expression at all. His figure was not tall, his frame was thick-set, his nose flat, his forehead full but low, his cheeks projecting, and red with the effect of strong liquors; his mouth, when he opened it, displayed a row of white teeth, but sharp and wide apart; it was, in fact, the mouth of a panther. His matted beard was soiled with foam, and his hands were stained with blood.

"Where did you get this sabre?" said Fedor.

"I tore it from the hands of an officer, whom I killed with his own weapon. We are conquerors — the town of —— is ours! O, we have had a glorious night! All who would not join our troop are dead — women, children, old men — all! They boiled some of the soldiers in a cauldron in the market-place. We warmed ourselves at the same fire on which our enemies were being cooked. It was glorious!"

Fedor did not answer.

"You say nothing?"

"I think though."

"And what is it that you think?"

"I think that we are playing a desperate game. In a town without defences, fifteen hundred inhabitants and fifty infirm veterans are easily put to the sword by two thousand peasants, falling on them suddenly; but at no very great distance there are considerable forces: we shall be crushed finally."

"Very likely! And what then is to become of the justice of God, and the will of the emperor? Coward! do you not see that the time for hesitation has passed? After what has been already done, we must conquer or die. Listen to me then, instead of turning away your head. We have spread everywhere fire and blood: do you understand me? After such a carnage, pardon is impossible. The whole town is dead. When we set to work, we do our business thoroughly. You seem to be displeased with our triumph?"

"I do not like the murder of the women."

"It is necessary to destroy an evil race, root and branch."

Fedor was silent. Basil tranquilly continued his discourse, which he only interrupted to swallow his tea. "You appear sad and melancholy, my son?"

Fedor continued silent.

"It is your foolish love for the daughter of Thelenef our mortal enemy, which has been your ruin."

"I!—a love for my foster-sister! I have a friendship for her, if you like: but——"

"Pshaw! pshaw!—a curious kind of friendship yours!"

The young man rose, and tried to place his hand on the other's mouth.

"What do you mean, boy? One would suppose you feared being overheard," continued Basil, without changing his manner.

Fedor remained motionless: the peasant continued—

"It is not I who will be your dupe; her father Thelenef was not so either, when he maltreated you."

Fedor again strove to interrupt him.

"What! you will not allow me to speak! You have not forgotten any more than I, that he once beat you. It was to punish you, not for the trifling fault invented by himself, but for your secret love of his daughter. He wanted to drive you from the country before the evil was past remedy."

Fedor, in the most violent agitation, walked up and down the room, unable to utter any reply. He bit his hands in impotent rage, till he at length found words to say:

"You remind me of a hateful day, comrade; let us talk of something else."

"I always talk of what I please: if you do not choose to answer me, I can talk alone; but, once for all, I will not be interrupted. I am your senior, and the godfather of your new-born babe; your captain also. Do you see this sign on my breast? It is that of my rank in our army. I have therefore a right to speak before you; and if you pretend to object, I have my men bivouacking outside; with a single whistle I could bring them around me, and in a few moments the house would be in a blaze. Patience, then, and we shall understand each other better."

The young man re-seated himself, affecting the most indifferent air that he could assume.

"What was I talking about?" continued Basil, grumbling between his teeth. "Oh, I was reminding you of an unpleasant recollection. Is it not true? But you have sadly forgotten it, my son, and I must bring back to your mind your own history. You will see at least that I know how to read your thoughts,

and to discover whether there beats within you the heart of a traitor."

Here Basil again interrupted himself, opened a casement, and spoke in the ear of a man who presented himself at the aperture, through which were seen five other armed peasants in the back-ground.

Fedor had seized his poniard, but he replaced it in his girdle; the life of Xenie was at stake, and the least imprudence might cause the hut to be set on fire, and all that was in it to perish! He therefore restrained himself; he wished once more to see his sister. Who can analyse all the mysteries of love? The secret of his life was being revealed to Xenie, without any contrivance or concurrence on his part. At this moment, terrible as it was, he experienced only excess of joy! What signifies the short duration of supreme felicity, — is it not eternal while it is felt? But these powerful illusions of the heart can never be known to men who are incapable of love. True love is not dependent upon time — its measure is supernatural — its movements are not to be calculated by cold human reason.

After a brief silence, the loud voice of Basil put an end to the sweet yet painful ecstasy of Fedor.

"But since you did not love your wife, why did you marry her? You acted there very foolishly."

This question again frenzied the mind of the young man.

To say that he loved his wife, was to lose all that he was about to gain. "I thought I loved her," he replied: "they told me it was necessary for me to marry. Could I know what was in my heart? I wished to please the daughter of Thelenef. I obeyed

without reflection. Is it not our habit as peasants to act in this manner?"

"It is. You pretend you were ignorant of what you wished. I will tell you: you wished simply to reconcile yourself with Thelenef."

"You little know me!"

"I know you better than you know yourself. You thought our tyrants were still needful to us; and you therefore yielded, to obtain the pardon of Thelenef. In truth, we should all have done as much in your place; but what I reproach you with, is your wish to deceive me, who see through all. There was no other way of regaining the favour of the father, than by setting him at rest as to the consequences of your love for the daughter; and with this view you married, without thinking of the grief of your poor wife, whom you have condemned to eternal misery, and whom you did not scruple to abandon at the moment when she was hoping to give you a son."

"I was ignorant of that when I quitted her: she concealed from me her situation. Once for all, I have acted without design or premeditation. I have been ever accustomed to the guidance of my foster-sister, who has so much wisdom."

"More's the pity."

"How?"

"I say it is a pity: she will be the greater loss to the country."

"Are you capable——"

"We are capable of destroying her as we have done the others. . . . Do you suppose we shall be so foolish as not to shed the last drop of the blood of Thelenef, — the blood of our most hateful enemy?"

"But she has done you only good!"

"She is his daughter,—that is enough! We shall send the father to hell, and the daughter to paradise,—this will be the only difference."

"You will not commit so horrible a deed?"

"Who shall hinder us?"

"I!"

"Thou, Fedor! thou, traitor! thou, who art my prisoner! thou, who hast deserted the army of thy brethren in the day of combat, for ——" He could not finish; for, during his last few words, Fedor, who, as the only means of safety left, had resolved to stab him, darted upon him like a tiger, and striking between the ribs, buried the poniard in his heart, stifling at the same time his scarcely commenced cry with a pelisse which he held in his hand. The last groans of the dying man did not alarm Fedor; they were too weak to be heard without. After encouraging his mother with a few words, he was about to bring her the lamp, in order to commence anew the preparations for the flight of Xenie; when, at the moment of passing by the sleeping old man, the latter started and awoke.

"Who art thou?" he said to his nephew, whom he did not recognise, and whose arm he forcibly seized. "What steam of blood!" Then, casting his eyes round the chamber, they at length fell, horror-struck, on the dead man.

Fedor had extinguished his lamp, but that of the Madonna was still burning. "Murder! murder! help!" cried the old man, in a voice of thunder. Fedor could not stop these cries, which were uttered more rapidly than they can be repeated, for the terror

of the aged man was at its height, and his strength was still very great. The unfortunate Fedor knew not how to act. Heaven did not aid him.

The troops of Basil, who were lying in wait, heard the cries. Before Fedor could disengage himself from the powerful grasp of the poor senseless being, for whom he felt a respect which induced him to spare his life, though at the risk of his own, six men, furnished with cords and armed with pitch-forks, stakes, and scythes, rushed into the cabin. To lay hold of Fedor, to disarm, and to bind him, was the work of a moment.

"Where are you going to take me?"

"To the castle of Vologda, to burn you there with Thelenef. You will see that your treason has not saved him."

These words were spoken by the oldest man of the troop. Fedor not replying, the man quietly continued:—"You did not think that our victory would be so complete and prompt: our army has sprung up on all sides; it is an inundation of divine justice. No one escapes us; our enemies are taken in their own snares; God is with us. We suspected you, and watched you narrowly. Thelenef was followed to the hiding-place where you conducted him, and has been there seized; you shall die together; the castle is already on fire."

Fedor, without uttering a word, cast down his head, and followed his executioners. He trusted that their rapid flight from the fatal cabin might yet be the means of saving Xenie.

Six men carried before him the body of Basil, six others escorted them with torches; the rest followed

without uttering a word. The funeral cortège traversed in silence the country, lit up with conflagrations in every direction. The horizon appeared each moment to lessen in circumference. A circle of fire bounded the plain. Vologda was burning; the town of —— was on fire, together with all the castles and farms of the prince, and several of the surrounding villages. The woods themselves did not escape. The carnage was universal. The conflagration illuminated the secret depths of the forest. Solitude existed no longer. Who can conceal himself on a plain when the forests are on fire? There can be no safe asylum against a flood of light pouring on all sides equally. Terror was at its height; night had fled, and yet the sun had not risen.

The escort of Fedor was increased by the marauders who were everywhere scouring the country. The crowd had become great by the time they reached the castle.

What a spectacle there awaited the prisoners!

The castle of Vologda, built entirely of wood, appeared like an immense funeral pyre, the flames of which reached to the heavens! The peasants, who had plundered this ancient mansion before setting it on fire, imagined they had burned Xenie in the habitation of her father.

A line of boats on the water, placed closely together, completed the blockade that had been established. In the midst of the semicircle formed by the army of the insurgents before the castle, the unfortunate Thelenef, torn from his retreat, and brought by force to the place destined for his execution, stood chained to a post; while the crowd of conquerors,

eager to behold the spectacle, flocked from all parts to this place of rendezvous.

The troop who guarded him formed a circle around their prey, and displayed in the light of the conflagration their loathsome banners. Great God! what colours! They were the mangled remains of the first victims, carried upon pikes and sabres. Heads of women with flowing hair, pieces of human bodies stuck upon pitch-forks, mutilated infants, gory bones. The scene seemed peopled with hideous phantoms, which it might have been supposed had escaped from hell, to assist in the orgies of the last inhabitants of earth.

This pretended triumph of liberty was like the aspect of some great convulsion of nature. The flames and crash of the timbers of the castle resembled the eruption of a volcano. The revengeful passions of the people were like the lava, which, long boiling silently in the womb of the earth, had at length found vent, and spread in torrents on every side. Confused murmurs might be heard among the crowd, but no voice could be distinguished, unless it was that of the victim whose curses and imprecations rejoiced the hearts of the executioners. These monsters were, for the most part, men of remarkable beauty; all had a manner and bearing that was naturally noble and gentle; they seemed more like evil angels, whose faces yet retained their pristine glory, than human beings. Fedor himself much resembled his persecutors. All the Russians of pure Slavonian race show by their faces that they are of the same family; even when engaged in exterminating each other it can be

seen that they are brothers,—a circumstance which renders the carnage more horrible.

But then, these are no longer the children of nature; they are men perverted by a cruel and unfeeling social system. The natural man exists only in books; where he forms a theme for philosophic declamation, an ideal type, from which moralists draw their deductions just as mathematicians, in certain calculations, proceed upon given quantities. Nature, for the primitive man, as for the degenerated man, is still a state of society; and, whatever may be said, the most civilised society is the best.

The fatal circle opened for a moment, to allow of the entrance of Fedor and his execrable escort. Thelenef was so placed as not, at first, to perceive his youthful liberator. His execution was about to begin, when a murmur of terror spread among the crowd.

"A spectre! a spectre! It is she!" was the cry heard on all sides. The ring broke and dispersed,—the executioners fled before a phantom! Cruelty readily unites with superstition.

The flight was, however, arrested by several of the more determined ruffians, who shouted that it was Xenie herself, living, and in their power.

"Stay! stay!" cried a female voice, the agonizing accents of which went to all hearts, but above all to the heart of Fedor. "Let me pass, I will see them! They are my father and my brother! You will not forbid me to die with them?" Ere she had concluded these words, Xenie had reached the spot where Fedor stood incapable of motion, and fell insensible at his feet.

We here feel the necessity of abridging the de-

scription of this horrible scene. It was long, but we will describe it in few words. We must, however, first ask pardon for what we do relate.

Xenie, in the cabin where we left her, had forced herself to maintain silence, for fear of increasing the danger of Fedor; but, as soon as the two women were alone, she escaped, and hastened to share the fate of her father.

The execution of Thelenef commenced. Just heavens! what a death! To render it the more terrible to this unhappy being, they placed Xenie and Fedor before his eyes, seated and bound on a rude species of platform raised in haste at a short distance from him; they then cut off one by one, his feet and hands; and when at length the mutilated trunk was almost drained of blood, they stifled his death cry by stuffing into his mouth one of his own feet.

The women of the faubourg of Caen eating the heart of M. de Belzunce on the bridge of Vauxelles were models of humanity compared with the tranquil spectators of the death of Thelenef.

And this took place but a few months ago, and within a few days' journey of one of the most admired cities of Europe! After the father had ceased to suffer, one of the executioners advanced to seize the daughter; but he found her stiff and cold. During the torture of her father she had not made a single movement nor uttered a single word.

Fedor, at this sight, recovered, as though by some supernatural influence working within him, all his energy and presence of mind. By a miraculous exertion of strength he broke the cords that bound him, burst from the hands of his keepers, rushed towards

his beloved sister, raised her from the earth, and pressed her for a long time to his heart; then replacing her gently and respectfully on the grass, he addressed his tormentors with that calm, composed air that appears natural to the Orientals, even in the most tragical moments of life.

"You must not touch her. God has laid his hand upon her: she is mad."

"Mad!" responded the superstitious crowd: "God is with her!"

"It is he, it is the traitor, her lover, who has told her to counterfeit madness! No, no! we must make a finish with all the enemies of God and of men," cried the most ferocious of the savages; "besides, our oath binds us: let us do our duty! *Our father* (the Emperor) has willed it, and he will recompense us."

"Approach her, then, if you dare!" once more cried Fedor, in the delirium of despair; "she has suffered me to press her in my arms without resistance; you see she must be mad. But she speaks! Listen!"

They approached, and heard these words: "It was I, then, whom he loved!"

Fedor, who alone understood the meaning of this sentence, fell on his knees, and thanking God, burst into tears.

The executioners drew back from Xenie with involuntary respect. "She is mad!" they repeated to each other, in an under tone.

* * * * *

Since that day she has never passed an hour without repeating the same words — "It was I, then, whom he loved!"

Many, in seeing her so calm, would question her

insanity. It is supposed that the love of Fedor, thus accidentally revealed, awoke in the heart of his foster-sister, the innocent, though passionate tenderness, which the unhappy girl had, unknown either to herself or her lover, so long felt for him; and that the suddenness of the untimely discovery broke her heart.

No exhortation or advice has hitherto been able to prevent her repeating these words, which proceed from her lips mechanically, and with an incessant volubility which is frightful.

Her mind, her whole existence, has stopped, and gathered itself around the involuntary avowal of the love of Fedor, and the organs of intelligence continue their functions, as it were, by the operation of a spring, obeying that remainder of the will which bids them for ever repeat the mysterious and sacred words which suffice for her mental life.

If Fedor did not perish after Thelenef, it was not to the weariness of the executioners that he owed his safety, but to that of the spectators; for the passive party tires of crime more quickly than he who is actively engaged in its perpetration. The crowd, satiated with blood, desired that the execution of the young man should be deferred until the following night. In the interval, considerable forces arrived from several sides. On the morrow, the canton in which the revolt had sprung up was surrounded, the villages were decimated, the most culpable — condemned, not to death, but to a hundred and twenty strokes of the knout — miserably perished. The remainder were banished to Siberia. Nevertheless, the populations in the neighbourhood of Vologda are not yet restored to quiet and order; each day witnesses the departure

of hundreds of peasants, exiled in a mass to Siberia. The lords of these deserted villages are ruined; for in estates of this kind, it is the men who constitute the wealth of the proprietor. The rich domains of the Prince —— have become a dreary solitude. Fedor, with his mother and his wife, have been compelled to follow the inhabitants of their desolate village.

Xenie was present at the departure of the exiles, but she did not say adieu, for this new misfortune had not restored to her the light of reason.

At the moment of departing, an unexpected event cruelly aggravated the grief of Fedor and his family. His wife and mother were already in the cart, and he was about to follow them, to quit Vologda for ever; but he saw only Xenie, he suffered only for his sister, an orphan, deprived of reason, or at least of memory, and whom he was going to abandon among the still warm ashes of their native hamlet. Now that she had need of the kindest aid, strangers were going to be her only protectors. The bitter feeling of despair which this thought produced, stopped his tears. A piercing cry, proceeding from the cart, recalled him to the side of his wife, whom he found fainting; — one of the soldiers was taking away his child.

"What are you going to do?" cried the distracted father.

"To place it there by the way-side that they may bury it; do you not see that it is dead?" replied the Cossack.

"I will carry it myself!"

"You shall not touch it."

At this moment, other soldiers attracted by the noise, seized Fedor, who, yielding to irresistible force,

could only weep and supplicate. "He is not dead, he has fainted; let me embrace him. I promise you," he said, convulsively sobbing, "to give him up to you if his heart no longer beats. You, perhaps, have a son; have pity on me, then," said the unfortunate man, overcome with grief. The Cossack was moved; he restored to him his child. Scarcely had the father touched the icy body, than his hair stood upon his forehead,—he cast his eyes around him, they encountered the inspired look of Xenie. Neither misfortune, nor injustice, nor death, nor insanity,—nothing upon earth could destroy the sympathy of these two hearts, born to understand each other.

The young man made a sign to Xenie; the soldiers respected the poor maniac, who advanced, and received the body of the babe from the hands of its father, but without a word being uttered. The daughter of Thelenef, still without speaking, next took off her veil and gave it to Fedor; she then pressed the little corpse in her arms, and, charged with her sacred burden, remained in the same place, immovable, until she had seen her beloved brother, supported between a weeping mother and a dying wife, leave for ever the village which had given him birth. She long followed with her eye the convoy of the exiled peasants: at length, when the last cart had disappeared on the road to Siberia, and she was left alone, she took away the infant, and began to play with the cold remains, bestowing upon them the most tender and endearing caresses.

"He is not dead, then!" said the lookers on, "he will revive; she will restore him!"

Power of love! who can assign thy limits? * * * *

The mother of Fedor reproached herself without ceasing, for not having detained Xenie in the cottage of the old man; "at least she would not then have been forced to witness the punishment of her father," said the good Elizabeth.

"You would have preserved her reason, only to have increased her sufferings," replied Fedor; and again there was a dead silence.

The poor old woman had for a time been very resigned. Neither the massacres nor the fire had extorted from her a single complaint; but when it was necessary to submit with the other Vologdians to the pain of exile — to quit the cabin where her son was born, where the father of her son had died, when she was obliged to abandon her brother in helpless dotage, courage forsook her, her fortitude suddenly failed, she clung to the planks of her cottage, and at length had to be torn away, and placed by force in the téléga, where we have seen her weeping for the new-born infant of her beloved son.

It will perhaps scarcely be believed that the tender cares, the vivifying breath, or perhaps the prayers of Xenie, restored at length the life of the child whom Fedor had believed to be dead. This miracle of tenderness, or of piety, causes her to be venerated as a saint by the strangers sent from the North to repeople the deserted ruins of Vologda.

Those men who believe her mad would not dare to take from her the child of her brother: no one thinks of disputing with her this precious prey, rescued thus wonderfully from the jaws of death. Such a miracle of love will console even the exiled father, whose heart will again feel a thrill of pleasure, when he

knows that his son has been saved, and saved by Xenie!

A goat follows her to nourish the infant. The virgin mother may sometimes be seen, a living picture, seated in the sun among the dark ruins of the castle in which she was born, and smiling fondly on the child of her soul, the son of the hapless exile.

She cradles the little one upon her knees with a virgin grace, and his awaking brings a smile of angelic delight upon her countenance. Without knowing or hating the world, she has passed from charity to love, from love to madness, from madness to maternity. God watches over her!

Sometimes she appears struck with some sweet and sad remembrance: then her lips, the senseless echoes of the past, murmur mechanically these mysterious words — the last and only expression of her intellectual life, and of which not one of the inhabitants of Vologda can divine the meaning, — "It is I, then, whom he loved!"

Neither the Russian poet nor myself have shrunk from the expression of *virgin mother* as applied to Xenie, and neither of us think that we have been wanting in respect for the sublime verse of the Catholic poet —

"O Vergine Madre, figlio del tuo figlio,"*

or profaned the profound mystery that is indicated in those few words.

* Il Paradiso of Dante, cant. 33. i. v.

CHAP. XIX.

PETERSBURG IN THE ABSENCE OF THE EMPEROR.—CHARACTER OF THE COURTIERS. — THE TCHINN. — ITS NATURE AND ORIGIN. — DESTRUCTION OF THE ARISTOCRACY. — CHARACTER OF PETER THE GREAT. — THE TCHINN DIVIDED INTO FOURTEEN CLASSES. — AN IMMENSE POWER IN THE HANDS OF THE EMPEROR. — OPPOSITE OPINIONS ON THE FUTURE INFLUENCE OF RUSSIA. — RUSSIAN HOSPITALITY. — POLITE FORMALITIES. — RESEMBLANCE TO THE CHINESE. — DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE RUSSIANS AND THE FRENCH. — RUSSIAN HONESTY. — OPINION OF NAPOLEON. — THE ONLY SINCERE MAN IN THE EMPIRE. — SPOILED SAVAGES. ERRORS OF PETER THE GREAT. — ABSURD ARCHITECTURE. — BEAUTY OF THE QUAYS. — THE GREAT SQUARE. — THE CHURCHES. — PALACE OF THE TAURIDA. — ANTIQUE VENUS. — THE HERMITAGE. — PICTURE GALLERY. — PRIVATE SOCIAL CODE OF THE EMPRESS CATHERINE.

I HAD promised my friends not to return to France without seeing Moscow, the fabulous city — fabulous in spite of history; for the grandeur of the events connected with it, though they recall the most positive and clearly-defined occurrences of our age, renders its name poetical beyond all other names.

This scene of an epic poem has a sublimity which contrasts, in a whimsical manner, with the spirit of an age of mathematicians and stock-jobbers. I am therefore especially impatient to reach Moscow, for which city I set out in two days. My impatience will not, however, prevent my expatiating on all that may strike me before arriving there, for I mean to

complete, as far as I am able, the picture of this vast and singular empire.

It is impossible to describe the dulness of St. Petersburg during the absence of the emperor. At no time does the city exhibit what may be called gaiety; but without the court, it is a desert. The reader is aware that it is constantly menaced with destruction by the sea. This morning, while traversing its solitary quays and empty streets, I said to myself, "Surely the city must be about to be inundated; the inhabitants have fled, and the water will soon recover possession of the marsh." Nothing of the kind: Petersburg is lifeless only because the Emperor is at Peterhoff. The water of the Neva, driven back by the sea, rises so high, and the banks are so low, that this large inlet, with its innumerable arms, resembles a stagnant inundation, an overflowing marsh. They call the Neva a river, but it is for want of a more precise signification. At Petersburg the Neva has already become the sea; higher up, it is a channel of a few leagues in length, which serves to convey the superfluous waters of Lake Ladoga into the Gulf of Finland.

At the period when the quays of Petersburg were built, a taste for structures of small elevation prevailed among the Russians. The adoption of this taste was very injudicious in a country where the snow, during eight months in the year, diminishes the height of the walls by six feet; and where the surface of the soil presents no variety that might, in any degree, relieve the monotony of the regular circle which forms the unchangeable line of horizon, serving as a frame for scenes level as the ocean. In

my youth, I inhaled enthusiasm at the feet of the mountainous coasts of Calabria, before landscapes all of whose lines, excepting those of the sea, were vertical. Here, on the contrary, I see only one plane surface terminated by a perfectly horizontal line drawn betwixt the sky and the water. The mansions, palaces, and colleges which line the Neva, seem scarcely to rise above the soil, or rather the sea: some have only one story, the loftiest not more than three, and all appear dilapidated. The masts of the vessel overshoot the roofs of the houses. These roofs are of painted iron; they are light and elegant, but very flat, like those of Italy, whereas pointed roofs are alone proper in countries where snow abounds. In Russia, we are shocked at every step by the results of imitation without reflection.

Between the square blocks of an architecture which pretends to be Italian, run wide, straight, and empty vistas, which they call streets, and which, notwithstanding their projecting colonnades, are anything but classical. The scarcity of the women contributes to the dulness of the city. Those who are pretty, seldom appear on foot. Wealthy persons who wish to walk, are invariably followed by a servant. The practice is, here, one of prudence and necessity.

The Emperor alone has the power to people this wearisome abode, abandoned so soon as its master has disappeared. He is the magician who puts thought and motion into the human machines, — a magician in whose presence Russia wakes, and in whose absence she sleeps. After the Court has left, the superb metropolis has the appearance of a theatre when the

representation is over. Since my return from Peterhoff I can scarcely recognise the city I left four days ago; but were the Emperor to return this evening, everything to-morrow would assume its former interest. We should have to become Russians to understand the power of the sovereign's eye; it is a very different thing from the lover's eye spoken of by La Fontaine. Do you suppose that a young girl bestows a thought on her love affairs in the presence of the Emperor? Do not deceive yourself; she is occupied with the idea of procuring some promotion for her brother. An old woman, so soon as she breathes the air of the court, feels no longer her infirmities. She may have no family to provide for — no matter, she plays the courtier for the pure love of the game. She is servile without an object, just as others like play for its own sake. Thus, by an endeavour to shake off the burden of years, this wrinkled puppet loses all the dignity of age. We have no pity for busy intriguing decrepitude, because it is ridiculous. At the end of life it is surely time to set about practising the lesson which time is ever teaching, the grand art, namely, of giving up. Happy those who early learn to apply this lesson. To renounce is the great proof of a powerful mind: to abdicate a position before it is lost,—this is the policy of old age.

It is, however, a policy little practised at court, and at that of St. Petersburg less than at any other. Busy, restless old women are the plagues of the court of Russia. The sun of favour dazzles and blinds the ambitious, more especially those of the female sex; it prevents their discerning their true interest, which would be to save their pride by concealing the mi-

series of their hearts. On the contrary, the Russian courtiers glory in the abject meanness of their souls. The flatterer here shuffles his cards upon the table, and I am only astonished that he can win anything in a game so palpable to all the world. In the presence of the emperor the asthmatic breathes, the paralysed becomes active, the gouty loses his pain, the lovers no longer burn, the young men no longer seek to amuse themselves, the men of mind no longer think. In lieu of all these human states, mental and physical, one combined sentiment of avarice and vanity animates life even to its latest sigh. These two passions are the breath of all courts; but here they impart to their victims a military emulation, a disciplined rivalry, whose agitating influences extend throughout all the stages of society. To rise a step by more carefully dancing attendance — such is the absorbing thought of this etiquette-instructed crowd.

But then, what prostration of strength, when the luminary in whose beam these flattering motes may be seen to move, is no longer above the horizon! It is like the evening dew quenching the dust, or the nuns in Robert le Diable, again repairing to their sepulchres, to wait the signal for another round.

With this continual stretch of all minds towards advancement, conversation is impossible. The eyes of the Russian courtiers are the sunflowers of the palace. They speak without interesting themselves in anything that is said, and their looks remain all the while fascinated by the sun of favour.

The absence of the emperor does not render conversation more free: he is still present to the mind. The thoughts, instead of the eyes, then become the

sunflowers. In one word, the emperor is the god, the life, the passion of this unhappy people. Imagine human existence reduced to the hope that an obeisance will procure the acknowledgments of a look! God has implanted too many passions in the human heart for the uses which are here made of it.

If I put myself in the place of the only man who has here the right to live free, I tremble for him. To have to play the part of Providence over sixty millions of souls is a dreadful office. The Divinity has only the choice of two things: either to destroy his own power by showing himself a man, or to lead his votaries to the conquest of the world, in maintaining his character as a god. It is thus that in Russia the whole of life becomes nothing more than a school of ambition.

But by what road have the Russians reached this point of self-abnegation? What human means could produce such a political result? The cause of all is the *tchinn:* the tchinn is the galvanism, the apparent life of souls and bodies here — the passion which survives all other passions. I have shown its effects; it is therefore necessary that I should explain its nature.

The tchinn is a nation formed into a regiment; it is the military system applied to all classes of society, even to those which never go to war. In short, it is the division of the civil population into ranks, which correspond to ranks in the army. Since this institution has been established, a man who has never seen exercise may obtain the title of colonel.

Peter the Great — it is always to him that we must go back in order to understand the actual state

of Russia — Peter the Great, troubled by certain national prejudices which had a resemblance to aristocracy, and which incommoded him in the execution of his plans, took it into his head one day to discover that the minds of his people were too independent; and, in order to remedy the evil, this great workman could devise nothing better in his profoundly deep, yet narrow penetration, than to divide the herd, that is to say, the people, into classes, entirely irrelative of name, birth, and family; so that the son of the highest noble in the empire may belong to an inferior class, whilst the son of one of the peasants may rise to the highest classes, if such be the good will of the emperor. Under this division of the people, every man takes his position according to the favour of the prince. Thus it is that Russia has become a regiment of sixty millions strong; and this is the tchinn — the mightiest achievement of Peter the Great.

By its means, that prince freed himself in one day from the fetters of ages. The tyrant, when he undertook to regenerate his people, held sacred neither nature, history, character, nor life. Such sacrifices render great results easy. Peter knew better than any one that, so long as an order of nobility exists in a community, the despotism of one man can be nothing more than a fiction. He therefore said, "To realise my government I must annihilate the remains of the feudal system; and the best way of doing this is to make caricatures of gentlemen — to destroy the nobility by rendering it a creation of my own." It has consequently been, if not destroyed, at least nullified by an institution that occupies its place, though

it does not replace it. There are castes in this social system, in which to enter is to acquire hereditary nobility. Peter the Great, whom I should prefer to call Peter the Strong, forestalling our modern revolutions by more than half a century, thus crushed the spirit of feudalism. Less powerful under him than it was among us, it fell beneath the half civil half military institution which constitutes modern Russia. Peter was endowed with a clear and yet a limited understanding. In rearing his system on so great a ruin, he knew not how to profit by the exorbitant powers he had engrossed, except in mimicking more at his ease the civilisation of Europe.

With the means of action usurped by this prince, a creative genius would have worked much greater miracles. The Russian nation, ascending after all the others upon the great stage of the world, possessed the gift of imitation in lieu of genius, and had a carpenter's apprentice for its prompter! Under a chief less fond of minutiæ, less attached to details, that nation would have distinguished itself, more tardily, it is true, but more gloriously. Its power, corresponding with its own internal requirements, would have been useful to the world: it is now only astonishing.

The successors of this lawgiver in fustian have, during one hundred years, united with the ambition of subjugating their neighbours, the weakness of copying them. In the present day, the Emperor Nicholas believes the time is arrived when Russia has no longer need of looking for models among foreigners in order to conquer and to rule the world. He is the first really Russian sovereign since

Ivan IV. Peter I. was a Russian in character, though not in politics; Nicholas is a German by nature, but a Russian by calculation and by necessity.

The tchinn consists of fourteen classes, each of which possesses its own peculiar privileges. The fourteenth is the lowest.

Placed immediately above the serfs, its sole advantage consists in its members having the title of freemen. Their freedom means that no one can strike them without rendering himself liable to prosecution. In return, every member of the class has to inscribe on his door, his registered number, in order that no superior may be led to act under an ignorance that would render him liable to a penalty.

The fourteenth class is composed of persons in the lowest employ under the government, clerks of the post-office, factors, and other subordinates charged with carrying or executing the orders of the heads of departments: it answers to the rank of sub-officer in the imperial army. The men who compose it are servants of the Emperor, and serfs of no one: they possess a sense of their social dignity. But as to human dignity, it is not known in Russia.

All the other classes of the tchinn answer to as many military grades; the order that reigns throughout the entire state is analogous to the order of the army. The first class stands at the summit of the pyramid, and is now composed of one single man — Marshall Paskiewitch, viceroy of Warsaw.

The will of the Emperor is the sole means by which an individual is promoted in the tchinn; so that a man rising step by step, to the highest rank

in this artificial nation, may attain the first military dignity, without having served in any army. The favour of promotion is never demanded, but always intrigued for.

There is here an immense quantity of fermenting material placed at the disposal of the head of the state. Medical men complain of their inability to communicate fever to certain patients in order to cure them of chronic maladies. The Czar Peter inoculated with the fever of ambition the whole body of his people, in order to render them more pliant, and to govern them according to his humour.

The English aristocracy is equally independent of birth; it depends upon two things which may be acquired, office and estate. If, then, this aristocracy, moderated as it is, still imparts an enormous influence to the crown, how great must be the power of that crown whence all these things — the rank, and also the office and estate — are both *de jure* and *de facto* derived!

There results from such a social organisation a fever of envy so violent, a stretch of mind towards ambition so constant, that the Russian people will needs become incapable of any thing except the conquest of the world. I always return to this expression, because it is the only one that can explain the excessive sacrifices imposed here upon the individual by society. If the extreme of ambition can dry up the heart of a man, it may also stop the fountain of intellect, and so lead astray the judgment of a nation as to induce it to sacrifice its liberty for victory. Without this idea, avowed or disguised, and the influence of which many, perhaps,

obey unconsciously, the history of Russia would seem to me an inexplicable enigma.

Here is suggested the grand question: is the idea of conquest that forms the secret aspiration of Russia a lure, suited only to seduce for a period, more or less long, a rude and ignorant population, or is it one day to be realised?

This question besets me unceasingly, and, in spite of all my efforts, I cannot resolve it. All that I can say is, that since I have been in Russia, I take a gloomy view of the future reserved for Europe. At the same time, my conscience obliges me to admit that my opinion is combated by wise and very experienced men. These men say that I exaggerate in my own mind the power of Russia; that every community has its prescribed destiny, and that the destiny of this community is to extend its conquests eastward, and then to become divided. Those minds that refuse to believe in the brilliant future of the Slavonians, agree with me as regards the amiable and happy disposition of that people; they admit that they are endowed with an instinctive sentiment of the picturesque; they allow them a natural talent for music; and they conclude that these dispositions will enable them to cultivate the fine arts to a certain extent, but that they do not suffice to constitute the capacity for conquering and commanding which I attribute to them. They add, that "the Russians lack scientific genius; that they have never shown any inventive power; that they have received from nature an indolent and superficial mind; that if they apply themselves, it is through fear rather than inclination: fear makes them apt to undertake and

to draw the rough drafts of things, but also it prevents their proceeding far in any effort: genius is, in its nature, hardy as heroism; it lives on liberty; whilst fear and slavery have a reign and a sphere limited as mediocrity, of which they are the arms. The Russians, though good soldiers, are bad seamen; in general, they are more resigned than reflective, more religious than philosophical; they have more instinct of obedience than will of their own; their thoughts lack a spring as their souls lack liberty. The task which is to them most difficult, and least natural, is seriously to occupy their minds and to fix their imaginations upon useful exercises. Ever children, they might nevertheless for a moment be conquerors in the realm of the sword; but they would never be so in that of thought: and a people who cannot teach any thing to those they conquer, cannot long be the most powerful.

"Even physically, the French and English are more robust than the Russians; the latter are more agile than muscular, more savage than energetic, more cunning than enterprising; they possess passive courage, but they want daring and perseverance." The army, so remarkable for its discipline and its appearance on days of parade, is composed, with the exception of a few *élites corps*, of men well clad when they show themselves in public, but slovenly and dirty so long as they remain in their barracks. The cadaverous complexions of the soldiers betray hunger and disease: the two campaigns in Turkey have sufficiently demonstrated the weakness of the giant. Finally, a community that has not tasted liberty at its birth, and in which all the great political crises have been

brought about by foreign influence, cannot, thus enervated in its germ, have a long existence in prospect."

Such, it seems to me, are the strongest reasons opposed to my fears by the political optimists. From them it is concluded that Russia, powerful at home, and formidable when she struggles with the Asiatic people, would break herself against Europe so soon as she should throw off the mask, and make war in maintenance of her arrogant diplomacy.

I have in no degree weakened the arguments of those who thus think. They accuse me of exaggerating the danger. At any rate my opinions are shared by other minds quite as sober as those of my adversaries, and who do not cease to reproach these optimists with their blindness, in exhorting them to see the evil before it become irremediable.

I stand close by the Colossus, and I find it difficult to persuade myself that the only object of this creation of Providence is to diminish the barbarism of Asia. It appears to me that it is chiefly destined to chastise the corrupt civilisation of Europe by the agency of a new invasion. The eternal tyranny of the East menaces us incessantly; and we shall have to stoop to it, if our extravagances and iniquities render us worthy of the punishment.

The reader must not expect from me a complete account of Russia. I neglect to speak of many celebrated things because they make little impression upon me. I wish only to describe that which strikes or interests me. Nomenclatures and catalogues disgust me with travels, and there are plenty of them without my adding to the list.

Nothing can be seen here without ceremony and

preparation. Russian hospitality is so edged round with formalities as to render life unpleasant to the most favoured strangers. It is a civil pretext for restraining the movements of the traveller, and for limiting the freedom of his observations. Owing to the fastidious politeness exercised in doing the honours of the land, the observer can inspect nothing without a guide: never being alone, he has the greater difficulty in forming his judgment upon his own spontaneous impressions; and this is what is desired. To enter Russia you must, with your passport, deposit also your right of opinion on the frontier. Would you see the curiosities of a palace, they give you a chamberlain, with whom you are obliged to view every thing, and, indiscriminately, to admire all that he admires. Would you survey a camp—an officer, sometimes a general officer, accompanies you: if it be an hospital, the head surgeon escorts you; a fortress, the governor, in person, shows it, or rather politely conceals it from you; a school, or any other public institution, the director or the inspector must be previously apprised of your visit, and you find him, under arms, prepared to brave your examination; if an edifice, the architect himself leads you over the whole building, and explains to you all that you do not care to know, in order to avoid informing you on points which you would take interest in knowing.

All this oriental ceremony leads people to renounce seeing many things were it only to avoid the trouble of soliciting admissions: this is the first advantage gained! But if curiosity is hardy enough to persist in importuning official personages, it is at least so carefully watched in its perquisitions, that they end

in nothing. You must communicate officially with the heads of the so called public establishments, and you obtain no other permission than that of expressing before the legitimate authorities the admiration which politeness, prudence, and a gratitude of which the Russians are very jealous, demand. They refuse you nothing, but they accompany you every where: politeness becomes a pretext for maintaining a watch over you.

In this manner they tyrannise over us in pretending to do us honour. Such is the fate of privileged travellers. As to those who are not privileged, they see nothing at all. The country is so organised that without the immediate intervention of official persons no stranger can move about agreeably, or even safely. In all this, will be recognised the manners and the policy of the East, disguised under European urbanity. Such alliance of the East and the West, the results of which are discoverable at every step, is the grand characteristic of the Russian empire.

A semi-civilisation is always marked by formalities; refined civilisation dispenses with them, just as perfect good breeding banishes affectation.

The Russians are still persuaded of the efficaciousness of falsehood; and such illusion on the part of a people so well acquainted with it, amazes me. It is not that they lack quick perception, but in a land where the governors do not yet understand the advantages of liberty, even for themselves, the governed naturally shrink from the immediate inconveniences of truth. One is momentarily obliged to repeat that the people here, great and small, resemble the Greeks of the Lower Empire.

I am perhaps not sufficiently grateful for the attentions which these people affect to lavish upon strangers who are at all known; but I cannot help seeing below the surface, and I feel, in spite of myself, that all their eagerness demonstrates less benevolence than it betrays inquietude.

They wish, in accordance with the judicious precept of Monomaque, that the foreigner should leave their country contented.* It is not that the real country cares what is said or thought of it; it is simply that certain influential families are possessed with the puerile desire of reviving the European reputation of Russia.

If I look farther, I perceive under the veil with which they seek to cloke every object, a love of mystery for its own sake. Here reserve is the order of the day, just as imprudence is in Paris. In Russia, secrecy presides over every thing; a silence that is superfluous insures the silence that is necessary; in short, the people are Chinese disguised; they do not like to avow their aversion to foreign observation, but if they dared to brave the reproach of barbarism as the true Chinese do, access to Petersburg would be as difficult for us as is the access to Pekin.

My reasons for wearying of Russian hospitality will be now seen. Of all species of constraint, the most insupportable to me is that of which I have not the right to complain. The gratitude I feel for the attentions of which I am here the object, is like that of a soldier's — made to serve by compulsion. As a traveller who specially piques himself on his independence, I feel that I am passing under the yoke; they trouble themselves unceasingly to discipline my

* See the motto in the title-page.

ideas, and every evening on returning to my quarters, I have to examine my thoughts to ascertain what rank they bear, and in what uniform they are clothed.

Having carefully avoided intimacy with many great lords, I have hitherto seen nothing thoroughly except the court. My wish has been to preserve my position as an independent and impartial judge; and I feared to incur accusations of ingratitude or want of good faith; above all, I feared to render subjects of the country responsible for my particular opinions. But at the court I have passed in review all the characteristics of society.

An affectation of French manners, without any of the tone of French conversation, first struck me. It conceals a caustic, sarcastic, Russian spirit of ridicule. If I remained here any time, I would tear away the mask from these puppets, for I am weary of seeing them copy French grimaces. At my age, a man has nothing more to learn from affectation; truth alone can always interest, because it imparts knowledge; truth alone is always new.

I observed from the very first, that the Russians of the lower classes, who are suspicious by nature, detest foreigners through ignorance and national prejudice; I have observed since, that the Russians of the higher classes, who are equally suspicious, fear them because they believe them hostile: "the French and the English are persuaded of their superiority over all other people;" this motive suffices to make a Russian hate foreigners, on the same principle that, in France, the Provincial distrusts the Parisian. A barbarian jealousy, an envy, puerile, but impossible to disarm, influences the greater

number of the Russians in their intercourse with the men of other lands.

The Muscovite character is in many respects the very opposite of the German. On this account it is that the Russians say they resemble the French; but the analogy is only apparent: in the inner character there is a great difference. You may, if you choose, admire in Russia pomp and oriental grandeur; you may study there Greek astuteness; but you must not seek for the Gallic naïveté, the sociability and the amiability of the French when they are natural; though I admit that you will find still less of the good faith, the sound intelligence, and the cordial feeling of the German. In Russia you may meet with good temper, because it is to be met with wherever there are men; but good nature is never seen.

Every Russian is born an imitator; he is, by consequence, a great observer.

This talent, which is proper to a people in its infancy, often degenerates into a mean system of espionage. It produces questions often importunate and impolite, and which appear intolerable, coming from people always impenetrable themselves, and whose answers are seldom more than evasions. One would say that friendship itself had here some private understanding with the police. How is it possible to be at ease with people so guarded and circumspect respecting all which concerns themselves, and so inquisitive about others? If they see you assume, in your intercourse with them, manners more natural than those which they show towards you, they fancy you their dupe. Beware then of letting them see you off your guard, beware of giving them your confi-

dence: to men who are without feeling themselves, it is an amusement to observe the emotions of others, an amusement to which I, for one, do not like to administer. To observe our manner of life is the greatest pleasure of the Russians; if we allowed them, they would amuse themselves by striving to read our hearts and analyse our sentiments, just as people study dramatic representations at the theatre.

The extreme mistrust of all classes here with whom you have any business, warns you to be circumspect; the fear that you inspire discloses the danger that you run.

The other day at Peterhoff, a victualler would not permit my servant to provide me with a miserable supper in my actor's box, without being previously paid for it, although the shop of this prudent man is but two steps from the theatre. What you put to your lips with one hand, must be paid for with the other; if you were to give a commission to a merchant without presenting him with money in advance, he would believe you were in jest, and would not undertake your business.

No one can leave Russia until he has forewarned all his creditors of his intention, that is to say, until he has announced his departure three times in the gazettes at an interval of eight days between each publication.

This is strictly enforced, unless at least you pay the police to shorten the prescribed time, and even then you must make the insertion once or twice. No one can obtain post horses without a document from the authorities certifying that he owes nothing.

So much precaution shows the bad faith that exists

in the country; for as, hitherto, the Russians have had little personal intercourse with foreigners, they must have taken lessons in wariness from themselves alone.

Their experience is only such as their position with regard to each other can teach them. These men will not allow us to forget the saying of their favourite sovereign, Peter the Great, "It takes three Jews to cheat a Russian."

At each step you take in the land, you recognise the politics of Constantinople as described by the historians of the crusades, and as discovered by the Emperor Napoleon in the Emperor Alexander, of whom he often said, "He is a Greek of the Lower Empire." Transactions with people whose founders and instructors have always been the sworn foes of chivalry, should be avoided as much as possible. Such people are slaves to their interest, and lords of their word. Hitherto, I have found in the whole empire of Russia but one person who appears to me to be sincere, and that one, I take pleasure in repeating, is the Emperor.

I own it costs less to an autocrat to be candid than it does to his subjects. For the czar to speak without disguise, is the performance of an act of authority. An absolute monarch who flatters and prevaricates must abdicate.

But how many have there not been who, on this point, have forgotten their power and their dignity! Base minds never think themselves above falsehood: we may therefore admire the sincerity even of a powerful ruler. The Emperor Nicholas unites frankness with politeness, and in him these two qualities, which are never seen combined in the vulgar, wonderfully act and re-act upon each other.

Among the nobles, those who do possess good manners, possess them in perfection. The proof of this may be seen daily at Paris and elsewhere; but a drawing-room Russian who has not attained true politeness, that is to say, the facile expression of a real amenity of character, has a coarseness of mind, which is rendered doubly shocking by the false elegance of his language and manners. Such ill-bred and yet well-informed, well-dressed, clever, and self-confident Russians, tread in the steps of European elegance, without knowing that refinement of habits has no value except as it announces the existence of something better in the heart of its possessor. These apprentices of fashion, who confound the appearance with the reality, are trained bears, the sight of which inclines me to regret the wild ones: they have not yet become polished men, although they are spoiled savages.

As there is such a place as Siberia, and as it is appropriated to the uses that are so well known, I could wish it were peopled with fastidious young officers and nervous fair ladies: "You want passports for Paris, you shall have them for Tobolsk!"

In this manner I would recommend the Emperor to check the rage for travelling, which is making fearful progress in Russia, among imaginative sub-lieutenants and fanciful women.

If, at the same time, he were to take back the seat of his empire to Moscow, he would repair the evil caused by Peter the Great, as far as one man may atone for the errors of generations.

Petersburg, a city built rather against Sweden than for Russia, ought to be nothing more than a sea-

port, a Russian Dantzic. Instead of this, Peter the First made it a box, from whence his chained boyards might contemplate, with envy, the stage on which is enacted the civilisation of Europe; a civilisation which, in forcing them to copy, he forbade them to emulate!

Peter the Great, in all his works, acted without any regard to humanity, time, or nature. The more we examine Russia, the more strongly shall we be confirmed in the opinion that that prince has been too highly extolled, both at home and abroad. Had he been as superior a character as is pretended, he would have perceived and shunned the wrong road into which he drove his people; he would have foreseen and detested the frivolity of mind, the superficial acquirements, to which he condemned them for ages.

Great men, in building up the future, do not destroy the past; on the contrary, they avail themselves of it, even in order to modify its consequences. Far from continuing to deify the enemy of their natural genius, the Russians ought to reproach him with being the cause of their possessing no character.*

That crowned missionary forced nature for a moment, because he had the power to do so; but to this his power was circumscribed. Had he been, in reality, what the superstition of his people, and the exaggeration of writers have made him in history, how differently would he have acted! He would have waited, and by that patience have merited his brevet of great man: he preferred obtaining it in

* The Russians are superficial in every thing, except the art of feigning.

advance, and caused himself to be canonised while yet living.

All his ideas, with the faults of character of which they were the consequence, have spread and multiplied under the reigns that followed. The Emperor Nicholas is the first who has endeavoured to stem the torrent, by recalling the Russians to themselves; an enterprise that the world will admire when it shall have recognised the firmness of spirit with which it has been conceived. After such reigns as those of Catherine and Paul, to make the Russia left by the Emperor Alexander a real Russian empire; to speak Russian, to think as a Russian, to avow himself a Russian—and this, while presiding over a court of nobles who are the heirs of the favourites of the *Semiramis of the North*—is an act of true courage. Whatever may be the result of the plan, it does honour to him who devised it.

It is true the courtiers of the Czar have no acknowledged nor assured rights; but they are still strong against their masters, by virtue of the perpetuated, traditional customs of the country. Directly to rebuke the pretensions of these men, to show himself, in the course of a reign already long, as courageous against hypocritical adherents as he was against rebel soldiers, is assuredly the act of a very superior monarch. This double struggle of the sovereign with his infuriated slaves on the one hand, and his imperious courtiers on the other, is a fine spectacle. The Emperor Nicholas fulfils the promise that brightened the day of his elevation to the throne, and this is saying a great deal; for no prince assumed the reins of power under circumstances more critical; none

ever faced an imminent danger with more energy and greatness of soul!

After the insurrection of 13th December, M. de la Ferronnays exclaimed, "I see Peter the Great civilised!" an observation that had point because it had truth. In contemplating this prince, in his court, developing his ideas of national regeneration with an indefatigable, yet quiet, unostentatious perseverance, one might exclaim with still greater reason, "I see Peter the Great come to repair the faults of Peter the Blind."

In striving to form a judgment of the present Emperor with all the impartiality of which I am capable, I find in him so many things worthy of praise, that I do not suffer myself to listen to any thing that might disturb my admiration.

Kings are like statues; people examine them with so minute an attention that their smallest faults, magnified by criticism, cause the most rare and genuine merits to be forgotten. But the more I admire the Emperor Nicholas, the more I may be thought unjust towards the Czar Peter. Nevertheless, I appreciate the efforts of determination that were needed to rear a city like Petersburg in a marsh, frozen during eight months of the year; but when my eyes unfortunately encounter one of those miserable caricatures which his passion, and that of his successors, for classic architecture has entailed upon Russia, my shocked senses and taste cause me to lose all that I had gained by reasoning. Antique palaces for barracks of Finns, pillars, cornices, pediments, and Roman peristyles under the pole, and all these things to be renovated every year with fine white stucco, — such

parodies of Greece and Italy, *minus* the marble and the sun, are, it must be allowed, calculated to revive all my anger. Besides, I can renounce with the greater resignation the title of impartial traveller, because I am persuaded that I still have a right to it.

Though I were menaced with Siberia, I would not be prevented repeating that the want of good sense in the construction of a building, of finish and of harmony in its details, is intolerable. In architecture, the object of genius is to find the most short and simple means of adapting edifices to the uses for which they are destined. Where, then, could be the genius of men who have piled up so many pilasters, arcades, and colonnades, in a land which cannot be inhabited for nine months in the year without double sashes to windows hermetically closed? At Petersburg, it is under ramparts that they should walk, not under light and airy peristyles. Vaulted galleries should be their vestibules. The heaven is their enemy; they should banish therefore the sight of it: the sun will not vouchsafe them his beams, they should live by torch-light. With their Italian architecture, they set up claims to a fine climate, and this only renders the rains and storms of their summer more intolerable, to say nothing of the icy darts that are respired under their magnificent porticoes, during the interminable winter season. The quays of Petersburg are among the finest objects in Europe. Why? Their splendour lies in their solidity. Mighty blocks of granite forming foundations that supply the place of mother earth! the eternity of marble opposed to the destructive power of cold!... These things give me an idea of strength and of greatness which

is intelligible. Petersburg is both protected from the Neva and embellished, by the magnificent parapets with which that river is lined. The soil fails us; we will therefore make a pavement of rocks that shall support our capital. A hundred thousand men die in the attempt, it matters not; we have now an European city and the renown of a great people. Here, whilst continuing to deplore the inhumanity that has presided over so much glory, I admire, though with regret. I admire also several of the points of view that may be obtained before the winter palace.

Although the largest structures in the city are lost in a space that is rather a plain than a square, the palace is imposing; the style of architecture, which is that of the Regency, has an air of grandeur, and the red tint of the stone with which it is built is not displeasing to the eye. The column of Alexander, the triumphal arch, the Admiralty, Peter the Great upon his rock, the offices of the ministers (which are so many palaces), and, finally, the wonderful church of St. Isaac, facing one of the three bridges thrown over the Neva,—all these objects, lost in the circumference of a single square, are not beautiful, but they are astonishingly great. The square, called the square of the palace, is in reality composed of three immense squares all formed into one: Petrofskii, Isaakskii, and the square of the winter palace. I have found there much to criticise; but as a whole I admire the edifices, lost though they be in the space which they should adorn.

I have ascended the brass cupola of the church of St. Isaac. The scaffoldings of this dome, which is one of the loftiest in the world, are in themselves

mighty fabrics. The church not being finished, I cannot form an idea of the effect that it will have as a whole.

From the summit is seen St. Petersburg, its flat monotonous environs, and its dull though pompous wonders of art, which disgust me with human miracles, and which will serve, I hope, as a lesson to princes who may again take it into their heads to despise nature in their choice of sites on which to raise their capitals. Nations would scarcely commit such errors; they are ordinarily the fruit of the pride of sovereigns, who interpret flattery to the letter, and view themselves as endowed with real creative power. What princes least fear, is becoming dupes of their own vanity. They distrust every body except themselves.

I have visited several churches: that of the Trinity is beautiful, but naked, as is the interior of nearly all the Greek churches that I have seen here. To make up for this, the exterior of the domes is clothed with azure and strewn with brilliant gold stars. The cathedral of Kasan, built by Alexander, is vast and beautiful; but its entrance is in a corner of the building. This is out of respect to the religious law which obliges the Greek altar to be invariably turned towards the east. The street not running in such direction as to allow of the rule being obeyed except by placing the church awry, this has been done; the men of taste have had the worst of it; the faithful have carried the day, and one of the most beautiful buildings in Russia has been spoiled by superstition.

The church of Smolna is the largest and most magnificent in Petersburg. It belongs to a religious

community, a kind of chapter of women and girls founded by the Empress Anne. Enormous buildings form the residences of these ladies. The noble asylum, with its cloisters, is a city of itself, but its architecture would be more appropriate for a military establishment, than a religious congregation: it is neither like a convent nor a palace; it is a barrack for women.

In Russia every thing is under a military system; the discipline of the army reigns even in the chapter of the ladies of Smolna.

Near to that building is seen the little palace of the Taurida, built in a few weeks by Potemkin for Catherine. The palace is elegant, but forsaken; and in this country that which is forsaken is soon destroyed; even the stones will not last, except on condition of their being cared for. A winter garden occupies one side of the building. It is a magnificent hot-house, empty at the present season, and I believe neglected at all seasons. Chandeliers, and other signs of elegance, old, but without the majesty which time imprints on the true antique, prove that dances and suppers have once been given there. The last ball I believe which the Taurida has seen, or ever will see, took place on the marriage of the Grand Duchess Helena, wife of the Grand Duke Michael.

In a corner is a Venus de Medicis, said to be a real *antique*. This model has, as is well known, been often reproduced by the Romans.

The statue is placed upon a pedestal, on which is this inscription in Russian:

"PRESENT FROM POPE CLEMENT XI.
TO THE EMPEROR PETER I.
1717—1719."

A naked Venus, sent by a pope to a schismatic prince, is certainly a singular present. The Czar, who had long meditated the project of eternizing schism, by usurping the last rights of the Russian Church, must have smiled at such a testimony of the good-will of the bishop of Rome.

I have seen also the paintings of the Hermitage, but I cannot now describe them, as I leave to-morrow for Moscow. The Hermitage! is not this a name strangely applied to the villa of a sovereign, placed in the midst of his capital, close to the palace where he resides! A bridge, thrown across a street, leads from one residence to the other.

All the world knows that there are here some choice pieces, especially of the Dutch school; but I do not like paintings in Russia, any more than music in London, where the manner in which they listen to the most talented performers, and the most sublime compositions, would disgust me with the art.

So near the pole, the light is unfavourable for seeing pictures; no one can enjoy the admirable shading of the colours with eyes, either weakened by snow, or dazzled by an oblique and continuous light. The hall of the Rembrandts is doubtless admirable; nevertheless, I prefer the works of that master, which I have seen at Paris and elsewhere.

The Claude Lorrains, the Poussins, and some works of the Italian masters, especially of Mantegna, Giambellini, and Salvator Rosa, deserve to be mentioned.

The fault of the collection is, the great number of inferior pictures that must be forgotten in order to

enjoy the master-pieces. In forming the gallery of the Hermitage, they have gathered together a profusion of names of the great masters; but this does not prevent their genuine productions being rare. These ostentatious baptisms of very ordinary pictures weary the virtuoso, without cheating him. In a collection of objects of art, the contiguity of beauty sets off the beautiful, and that of inferiority detracts from it. A judge who is wearied, is incapable of judging: ennui renders him unjust and severe.

If the Rembrandts and the Claude Lorrains of the Hermitage produce some effect, it is because they are placed in halls where there are no other pictures near them.

This collection is fine; but it appears lost in a city where there are so few that can enjoy it.

An inexpressible sadness reigns throughout the palace, which has been converted into a museum since the death of her who animated it by her presence and her mind. No one ever better understood familiar life and free conversation than did that absolute princess. Not wishing to resign herself to the solitude to which her position condemned her, she discovered the art of conversing familiarly even while reigning arbitrarily.

The finest portrait of the Empress Catherine which exists, is in one of the halls of the Hermitage. I remarked also a portrait of the Empress Mary, wife of Paul I., by Madame Le Brun. There is, by the same artist, a genius writing upon a shield. This latter work is one of her best; its colours, defying alike time and climate, do honour to the French school.

At the entrance of one hall, I found behind a green

curtain, the social rules of the Hermitage, for the use of those intimate friends admitted by the Czarina into the asylum of Imperial liberty.

I will translate literally this charter, granted to social intimacy by the caprice of the sovereign of the once enchanted place: it was copied for me in my presence:—

RULES TO BE OBSERVED ON ENTERING.

ARTICLE I.

On entering, the title and rank must be put off, as well as the hat and sword.

ARTICLE II.

Pretensions founded on the prerogatives of birth, pride, or other sentiments of a like nature, must also be left at the door.

ARTICLE III.

Be merry; nevertheless, *break nothing and spoil nothing.*

ARTICLE IV.

Sit, stand, walk, do whatever you please, without caring for any one.

ARTICLE V.

Speak with moderation, and not too often, in order to avoid being troublesome to others.

ARTICLE VI.

Argue without anger, and without warmth.

ARTICLE VII.

Banish sighs and yawns, that you may not communicate ennui, or be a burden to any one.

ARTICLE VIII.

Innocent games proposed by any member of the society, must be accepted by the others.

ARTICLE IX.

Eat slowly and with *appetite:* drink with moderation, that each may walk steadily as he goes out.

ARTICLE X.

Leave all quarrels at the door; that which *enters at one ear must go out at the other* before passing the threshold of the Hermitage. If any member violate the above rules, for each fault witnessed by two persons he must drink *a glass of fresh water* (*ladies not excepted*): furthermore he must read aloud a page of the Telemachiad (a poem by Frediakofsky). Whoever fails during one evening in three of these articles, must learn by heart six lines of the Telemachiad. He who fails in the tenth article must never more re-enter the Hermitage.

Before reading the above, I believed the Empress Catherine possessed a livelier and more pointed wit. Is this a simple pleasantry? If so it is a bad one, for the shortest jokes are the best. The care which has been taken to preserve the statutes, as though of great value, surprises me not less than the want of good taste which characterises them.

What chiefly provoked my laughter on reading this social code, was the use that had been made of the poem of Frediakofsky. Woe to the poet immortalised by a sovereign!

I leave to-morrow for Moscow.

CHAP. XX.

THE MINISTER OF WAR. — AN EVASION. — THE FORTRESS OF SCHLUSSELBURG. —FORMALITIES.—TROUBLESOME POLITENESS.—HALLUCINATIONS.—KOTZEBUE IN SIBERIA.—THE FELDJÄGER. — MANUFACTORIES OF PETERSBURG. — HOUSES OF RUSSIAN PEASANTS. — A RUSSIAN INN. — DIRTINESS OF THE PEOPLE. — THE COUNTRY WOMEN.—BAD ROADS.—THE ENGINEER AND HIS WIFE. —THE SLUICES OF SCHLUSSELBURG. — UNION OF THE CASPIAN AND BALTIC. —THE SOURCE OF THE NEVA. — INUNDATIONS OF PETERSBURG. —THE INTERIOR OF THE FORTRESS OF SCHLUSSELBURG. —THE TOMB OF IVAN.—ANGER OF THE COMMANDANT.— STATE PRISONERS. — A DINNER WITH THE MIDDLE CLASSES IN RUSSIA.— NATURAL CAUSTICITY OF THE PEOPLE.—POLITE CONVERSATION.—MADAME DE GENLIS.—FRENCH MODERN LITERATURE PROHIBITED. — A NATIONAL DISH. — DIFFERENCE IN THE MANNERS OF THE HIGHER AND MIDDLE CLASSES.—RETURN TO PETERSBURG.

On the day of the fête at Peterhoff, I had asked the minister of war what means I should take in order to obtain permission to see the fortress of Schlusselburg.

This grave person is the Count Tchernicheff. The brilliant aide-de-camp, the elegant envoy of Alexander at the court of Napoleon, is become a sedate man, a man of importance, and one of the most active ministers of the empire. Not a morning passes without his transacting business with the emperor. He replied, "I will communicate your desire to his majesty." This tone of prudence, mingled with an

air of surprise, made me feel that the answer was very significative. My request, simple as I had thought it, was evidently an important one in the eyes of the minister. To think of visiting a fortress that had become historical since the imprisonment and death of Ivan VI., which took place in the reign of the Empress Elizabeth, was enormous presumption. I perceived that I had touched a tender chord, and said no more on the subject.

Some days after this, namely, the day before yesterday, at the moment I was preparing to depart for Moscow, I received a letter from the minister of war, announcing permission to see the sluices of Schlusselburg!

The ancient Swedish fortress, called the key of the Baltic by Peter I., is situated precisely at the source of the Neva, on an island in the lake of Ladoga, to which the river serves as a natural canal, that carries its superfluous waters into the Gulf of Finland. This canal, otherwise called the Neva, receives, however, a large accession of water, which is considered as exclusively the source of the river, and which rises up under the waves immediately beneath the wall of the fortress of Schlusselburg, between the river and the lake. The spring is one of the most remarkable natural curiosities in Russia; and the surrounding scenery, though very flat, like all other scenery in the country, is the most interesting in the environs of Petersburg.

By means of a canal, with sluices, the boats avoid the danger caused by the spring: they leave the lake before reaching the source of the Neva, and enter the river about half a league below.

This then was the interesting work which I was permitted to examine.

I had requested to see a state prison; my request was met by a permission to see the floodgates.

The minister of war ended his note by informing me that the aide-de-camp, general director of the roads of the empire, had received orders to give me every facility for making this journey.

Facility! Good heavens! to what trouble had my curiosity exposed me, and what a lesson of discretion had they given me, by the exhibition of so much ceremony, qualified by so much politeness! Not to avail myself of the permission, when orders had been sent respecting me throughout the route, would have been to incur the charge of ingratitude; yet to examine the sluices with Russian minuteness, without even seeing the castle of Schlusselburg, was to fall with my eyes open into the snare and to lose a day; a serious loss, at this already advanced season, if I am to see all that I purpose seeing in Russia, without altogether passing the winter there.

I state facts. The reader can draw the conclusions. They have not here yet ventured to speak freely of the iniquities of the reign of Elizabeth. Any thing that might lead to reflection on the nature of the legitimacy of the present power passes for an impiety. It was therefore necessary to represent my request to the emperor. He would neither grant it nor directly refuse it; he therefore modified it, and granted me permission to admire a wonder of industry which I had no intention of seeing. From the emperor, this permission was forwarded to the minister, from the minister to the director-general, from the director-general to a chief

engineer, and, finally, to a sub-officer commissioned to accompany me, to officiate as my guide and to answer for my *safety* during the entire journey: a *favour* which rather reminds one of the janissary with whom they honoured foreigners in Turkey. This protection appears too much like a mark of distrust to flatter me as much as it irks me, and, while crushing in my hands the minister's letter, I think on the justice of the words of the prince, whom I met on the Travemünde steam boat, and with him am ready to exclaim, that "Russia is the land of useless formalities!"

I proceeded to the aide-de-camp general-director, &c. &c. &c. to claim the execution of the supreme command. The director was not at home; I must call to-morrow. Not wishing to lose another day, I persisted, and was told to return in the evening, when I was received with the usual politeness, and after a visit of a quarter of an hour, was dismissed with the necessary orders for the engineer of Schlusselburg, but none for the governor of the castle. In accompanying me to the antechamber, he promised that a sub-officer should be at my door on the morrow, at four o'clock in the morning.

I did not sleep. I became possessed with an idea that will appear sufficiently foolish; the idea that my guard might become my gaoler. If this man, instead of conducting me to Schlusselburg, eighteen leagues from Petersburg, should, when we had left the city, exhibit an order to transport me to Siberia, that I might there expiate my inconvenient curiosity, what should I say or do? It would be necessary, at first, to obey; and afterwards on arriving at Tobolsk,

if I ever arrived there, I would claim . . . . . The manifestations of politeness by no means re-assured me: on the contrary, I had not forgotten the smiles and kind words of Alexander, addressed to one of his ministers, who was seized by the feldjäger, at the door, even of the emperor's cabinet, and carried direct from the palace to Siberia.

Many other examples of sentences and executions of this character occurred to justify my presentiments and to disturb my imagination.

The being a foreigner is not sufficient guarantee. I called to mind the carrying off of Kotzebue, who, at the commencement of this century, was also seized by a feldjäger, and transported under circumstances similar to mine (for I already felt as if on the road) from Petersburg to Tobolsk. What had been the offence of Kotzebue? He had made himself feared because he had published his opinions, and because they were not thought all equally favourable to the order of things established in Russia. Now, who could assure me that I had not incurred the same reproach? or, which would be sufficient, the same suspicion? If I give the least umbrage here, can I hope that they will have more regard for me than they have had for others? besides, I am watched by spies — every foreigner is. They know, therefore, that I write, and carefully conceal my papers; they are, perhaps, curious to know what these papers are about.

Such were the fancies that possessed me the whole of the night before last; and though I visited yesterday without any accident the fortress of Schlusselburg, they are not so entirely unreasonable as to

make me feel quite beyond all danger for the remainder of my journey. I often say to myself, that the Russian police, prudent, enlightened, well-informed, would not have recourse to any *coup d'état*, unless it believed it necessary, and that it would be to attach too much importance to my person and my remarks, to suppose that they could be capable of making uneasy the men who govern this empire. Nevertheless, these reasons for feeling secure, and many others that present themselves, are more specious than solid: experience only too clearly proves the spirit of minutia which actuates those who have too much power: every thing is of importance to him who would conceal the fact that he governs by fear, and whoever depends on opinion, must not despise that of any independent man who writes: a government which lives by mystery, and whose strength lies in dissimulation, is afraid of every thing—every thing appears to it of consequence: in short, my vanity accords with my reflection and my memory of past events, to persuade me that I here run some danger.

If I lay any stress upon these inquietudes, it is simply because they describe the country. As regards my own feelings, they dissipate as soon as it is necessary to act. The phantoms of a sleepless night do not follow me upon the road: I am more adventurous in action than in thought; it is more difficult for me to think than to act with energy. Motion imparts to me as much courage as rest inspires me with doubt.

Yesterday, at five in the morning, I set out in a *calèche* drawn by four horses harnessed abreast.

Whenever they journey into the country the Russian coachmen adopt this ancient mode of driving, in which they display much boldness and dexterity. My feldjäger placed himself before me by the side of the coachman, and we quickly traversed St. Petersburg, soon leaving behind us the handsome part of the city, and next passing through that of the manufactories, among which are magnificent glass works and immense mills for the spinning of cotton and other fabrics, for the most part directed by Englishmen. This quarter of the city resembles a colony. As a man is only appreciated here according to his standing with the government, the presence of the feldjäger on my carriage had a great effect. This mark of supreme protection made me a person of consequence in the eyes of my own coachman, who had driven me the whole of the time that I had been in Petersburg. He appeared suddenly to discover and to glory in the too long concealed dignity of his master; his looks testified a respect that they had never done before; it seemed as though he wished to indemnify me for all the honours of which he had, mentally and in ignorance, hitherto deprived me.

The people on foot, the drivers of the carts and drowskas, all bowed to the mystic influence of my sub-officer, who, with a simple sign of his finger, made every obstruction of the road vanish like magic. The crowd was, as it were, annihilated before him, and I could not but think, if he had such power to protect me, what would be his power to destroy me if he had received an order to that effect. The difficulty attending an entrance into this country wearies more than it awes me; the difficulty of flying from

it would be more formidable. People say, "To enter Russia the gates are wide, to leave it they become narrow."

Under the guard of my soldier I rapidly followed the banks of the river; frequent views of which, through alleys of birch trees, with the appearance here and there of busy manufactories, and of wooden hamlets, enlivened the landscape, and made the road seem less monotonous than those I had hitherto travelled in Russia; not that the scenery was picturesque in the ordinary acceptation of the word, it was only less desolate than it is on the other side of the city: besides, I have a predilection for melancholy landscapes; there is always a species of grandeur in a scene, the contemplation of which produces reverie. I prefer, as regards poetical effect, the borders of the Neva to the plain between Montmartre and St. Denis, or the rich wheat fields of La Beauce and La Brie.

The appearance of several villages surprised me; they displayed signs of wealth, and even a sort of rustic elegance, which was very pleasing. The neat wooden houses form the line of a single street. They are painted, and their roofs are loaded with ornaments which might be considered rather ostentatious, if a comparison were made between the exterior luxury and the internal lack of conveniences and cleanliness in these architectural toys. One regrets to see a taste for superfluities among a people not yet acquainted with necessaries; besides, on examining them more closely, these habitations are discovered to be ill built.

Always the same taste for that which addresses the eye! Both peasants and lords take more pleasure

in ornamenting the road than in beautifying the interior of their dwellings. They feed here upon the admiration, or perhaps the envy, which they excite. But enjoyment, real enjoyment, where is it? The Russians themselves would be puzzled to answer the question.

Wealth in Russia is the food of vanity. The only magnificence that pleases me is that which makes no show, and I therefore find fault with every thing here which they wish me to admire. A nation of decorators will never inspire me with any other feeling than that of fearing lest I should become their dupe. On entering the theatre where their artificial representations are exhibited, I have but one desire; that, namely, of looking behind the curtain, a corner of which I am ever tempted to lift up. I came to see a country, I find only a playhouse.

I had ordered a relay of horses ten leagues from Petersburg. Four, ready harnessed, awaited me in a village, where I found a kind of Russian *Venta**, which I entered. It was the first time I had seen the peasants in their own houses.

An immense wooden shed, plank walls on three sides, plank flooring and plank ceiling, formed the hall of entrance, and occupied the greater part of the rustic dwelling. Notwithstanding the free currents of air, I found it redolent of that odour of onions, cabbages, and old greasy leather, which Russian villages and Russian villagers invariably exhale.

A superb stallion, tied to a post, occupied the attention of several men who were engaged in the dif-

* Venta, a Spanish country inn. — *Trans.*

ficult task of shoeing him. The magnificent but untractable animal belonged, I was told, to the stud of a neighbouring lord: the eight persons who were endeavouring to manage him, all displayed a figure, a costume, and a countenance that was striking. The population of the provinces adjoining the capital is not, however, handsome: it is not even Russian, being much mixed with the race of the Finns, who resemble the Laplanders.

They tell me that in the interior of the empire I shall find perfect models of Grecian statues, several of which I have indeed already seen in Petersburg, where the nobles are often attended by the men born on their distant estates.

A low and confined room adjoined this immense shed; it reminded me of the cabin of some river boat; walls, ceiling, floor, seats, and tables, were all of wood rudely hewn. The smell of cabbage and pitch was extremely powerful.

In this retreat, almost deprived of air and light, for the doors were low, and the windows extremely small, I found an old woman busy serving tea to four or five bearded peasants, clothed in pelisses of sheepskin, the wool of which is turned inwards, for it has already, and for some days past, become rather cold.* These men were of short stature. Their leather pelisses were rather tasteful, but they were very ill scented: I know nothing except the perfumes of the nobles that could be more so. On the table stood a bright copper kettle and a teapot. The tea is always of good quality, well made, and, if it is not pre-

* This is the 1st of August.

ferred pure, good milk is every where to be obtained. This elegant beverage served up in barns, I say barns for politeness-sake, reminds me of the chocolate of the Spaniards. It forms one of the thousand contrasts with which the traveller is struck at every step he takes among these two people, equally singular, though in many of their ways as different as the climates they inhabit.

I have often said that the Russian people have a sentiment of the picturesque: among the groups of men and animals that surrounded me in this interior of a Russian farm house, a painter would have found subjects for several charming pictures.

The red or blue shirt of the peasants is buttoned over the collar bone, and drawn close round the loins by a girdle, above which it lies in antique folds, and below forms an open tunic that falls over the pantaloon. The long Persian robe, often left open, which, when the men do not work, partly covers this blouse, the hair worn long and parted on the forehead, but shaved close behind rather higher than the nape, so as to discover all the strength of the neck — does not this form an original and graceful picture? The wild yet, at the same time, gentle expression of the Russian peasants also possesses grace: their elegant forms, their suppleness, their broad shoulders, the sweet smile of their mouth, the mixture of tenderness and ferocity which is discernible in their wild and melancholy look, render their general appearance as different from that of our labourers as the land they cultivate differs from the rest of Europe. Every thing is new here for a stranger. The natives possess a certain charm which can be felt though not expressed:

it is the oriental languor combined with the romantic reverie of a northern people; and all this is exhibited in an uncultured yet noble form, which imparts to it the merit of a primitive endowment. These people inspire much more interest than confidence. The common orders in Russia are amusing knaves: they may be easily led if they are not deceived; but as soon as they see that their masters or their masters' agents lie more than themselves, they plunge into the lowest depths of falsehood and meanness. They who would civilise a people must themselves possess worth of character—the barbarism of the serf accuses the corruptness of the noble.

If the reader be surprised at the ill-nature of my judgments, he will be yet more so when I add that I do but express the general opinion; the only difference is, that I express openly what every one here conceals, with a prudence that none would be surprised at if they saw, as I do, to what extent this virtue, which excludes so many others, is necessary to those who live in Russia.

Dirtiness is very conspicuous in the country, but that of the houses and the clothes strikes me more than that of the individuals. The Russians take much care of their persons. Their vapour baths, it is true, appear to us disgusting; and I should for myself much prefer the contact of pure water; still these boiling fogs cleanse and strengthen the body, though they wrinkle the skin prematurely. By virtue of their use, the peasants may be often seen with clean beards and hair, when as much cannot be said for their garments. Warm clothing costs money, and has to be worn a long time; the rooms also, in which

they think only of protecting themselves from the cold, are necessarily less aired than those of southern people. Of the air that purifies, the Russians are deprived for nine months in the year, so that their dirtiness is rather the inevitable effect of their climate than of their negligence.

In some districts the workpeople wear a cap of blue cloth, bulging out in the shape of a balloon. They have several other species of head-dress, all pleasing to the eye, and showing good taste as compared with the saucy affectation of negligence, visible among the lower orders in the environs of Paris.

When they work bare-headed, they remedy the inconvenience of their long hair by binding it with a kind of diadem, or fillet made of a riband, a wreath of rushes, or of some other simple material, always placed with care, and which looks well on the young people; for the men of this race have in general finely formed, oval heads, so that their working head-dress becomes an ornament. But what shall I say of the women? All whom I have hitherto seen have appeared to me repulsive: I had hoped in this excursion to have met some fair villagers; but here, as at Petersburg, they are broad and short in figure, and they gird their forms at the shoulders, a little above the bosom, which spreads freely under the petticoat. It is hideous! Add to this voluntary deformity, large men's boots and a species of riding coat, or jacket of sheep's skin, similar to the pelisses of their husbands, but, doubtless through a laudable economy, much less gracefully cut, and far more worn; falling indeed literally in rags — such is their toilette. Assuredly there is no part of the world

where the fair sex so completely dispenses with coquettish finery as in Russia (I speak only of the female peasants and of the corner of the land that I have seen). Nevertheless these women are the mothers of the soldiers of which the Emperor is so proud, and of the handsome coachmen of the streets of Petersburg.

It should be observed that the greater number of the women in the government of Petersburg are of Finnish extraction. I am told that in the interior of the country I shall see very good-looking female peasants.

The road from Petersburg to Schlusselburg is bad in many parts: there are sometimes deep beds of sand, sometimes holes of mud to be passed, over which planks have been very uselessly thrown. What is yet worse, are the small logs of wood rudely laid across each other, on certain marshy portions of the route, which would swallow up any other foundation. This rustic, ill-joined and movable flooring dances under the wheels; and frequent broken bones and broken carriages on Russian *grandes routes*, testify to the wisdom of reducing equipages to their most simple forms, to something about as primitive as the telega. I observed also several dilapidated bridges, one of which seemed dangerous to pass over. Human life is a small matter in Russia. With sixty millions of children how can there be the bowels of a father?

On my arrival at Schlusselburg, where I was expected, the engineer who has the direction of the sluices received me.

The weather was raw and gloomy. My carriage stopped before the comfortable wood-house of the

engineer, who introduced me himself into a parlour, where he offered me a light collation, and presented me, with a kind of conjugal pride, to a young and handsome person, his wife. She sat all alone, upon a sofa from which she did not rise on my entering. Not understanding French, she remained silent, and also motionless, I cannot tell why, unless she mistook immovability for good breeding, and starched airs for taste. Her object seemed to be to represent before me the statue of hospitality clothed in white muslin over a pink petticoat. I ate and warmed myself in silence: she watched me without daring to turn away her eyes, for this would be to move them, and immobility was the part she had to perform. If I had suspected there could be timidity at the bottom of this singular reception, I should have experienced sympathy, and felt only surprise; but I could hardly be deceived in such a case, for I am familiar with timidity.

My host suffered me to contemplate at leisure this curious image of rosy wax-work, dressed up in order to dazzle the stranger, though it confirmed him only in his opinion that the women of the North are seldom natural. The worthy engineer seemed flattered with the effect that his wife produced on me. He took my wonder for admiration; nevertheless, desirous of conscientiously acquitting himself of his duty, he at length said, "I regret to disturb you, but we have scarcely sufficient time to visit the works which I have received an order to show to you in detail."

I had foreseen the blow without being able to parry it. I therefore submitted with resignation, and suffered myself to be led from sluice to sluice, my mind still dwelling with useless regret upon

the fortress, that tomb of the youthful Ivan, which they would not suffer me to approach. It will be seen shortly how this secret object of my journey was attained.

To enumerate all the structures of granite that I have seen this morning, the floodgates fixed in grooves worked in blocks of that stone, the flags, of the same material, employed as the pavement of a gigantic canal, would fortunately little interest the reader; it will suffice him to know that during the ten years that have elapsed since the first sluices were finished, they have required no repairs. This is an astonishing instance of stability in a climate like that of Lake Ladoga. The object of the magnificent work is to equalise the difference of level that there is between the canal of Ladoga and the course of the Neva near to its source. With this object, sluices have been multiplied, without reference to cost, in order to render as easy and prompt as possible a navigation that the rigour of the seasons leaves open for only three or four months in the year.

Nothing has been spared to perfect the solidity and the precision of the work. The granite of Finland has been used for the bridges, the parapets, and even, I repeat it with admiration, for lining the bed of the canal; in short, all the improvements of modern science have been had recourse to, in order to complete, at Schlusselburg, a work as perfect in its kind as the rigours of the climate will permit.

The interior navigation of Russia deserves the attention of all scientific and commercial men: it constitutes one of the principal sources of the riches of the land. By means of a series of canals, the en-

tire extent of which is, like every other undertaking in this country, colossal, they have, since the reign of Peter the Great, succeeded in joining, so as to form a safe navigation for boats, the Caspian with the Baltic by the Volga, Lake Ladoga, and the Neva. This enterprise, bold in conception, prodigious in execution, is now completed, and forms one of the wonders of the civilised world. Although thus magnificent to contemplate, I found it rather tedious to inspect, especially under the conduct of one of the executors of the *chef-d'œuvre*. The professional man invests his work with the importance which no doubt it merits; but for a mere general observer, like myself, admiration is extinguished under minute details, — details which, in the present case, I will spare the reader.

When I believed I had strictly accorded the time and the praise that were due to the wonders I was obliged to pass in review in return for the favour which, it was supposed, I had received, I returned to the original motive of my journey, and, disguising my object in order the better to attain it, I asked permission to see the source of the Neva. This wish, the insidious innocence of which could not conceal the indiscretion, was at first eluded by the engineer, who replied, "It rises up under the water at the outlet of Lake Ladoga, at the end of the channel, which separates the lake from the island on which stands the fortress."

I knew this already, but replied: "It is one of the natural curiosities of Russia. Are there no means of reaching this spring?"

"The wind is too high; we could not see the bubbling up of the waters. It is necessary that the weather

be calm, in order that the eye may distinguish a fountain which rises from the bottom of the waves; nevertheless I will do what I can in order to satisfy your curiosity."

At these words the engineer ordered a very pretty boat to be manned with six rowers, who were handsomely clad. We immediately proceeded, as was said, to visit the source of the Neva, but, in reality, to approach the walls of the strong castle, or rather the enchanted prison to which I had been refused access with so artful a politeness. But the difficulties only served to excite my desire: had I had the power to give deliverance to some unhappy prisoner, my impatience could scarcely have been more lively.

The fortress of Schlusselburg is built on a flat island, a kind of rock, very little elevated above the level of the water. This rock divides the river in two parts; it also serves, properly speaking, to separate the river from the lake, for it indicates the point where the waters mingle. We rowed round the fortress in order, as we said, to approach as nearly as possible the source of the Neva. Our rowers soon brought us immediately over the vortex. They handled their oars so well that, notwithstanding the rough weather and the smallness of our boat, we scarcely felt the heave of the waves, which, nevertheless, rolled at this spot as much as in the open sea. Being unable to distinguish the source, which was concealed by the motion of the billows, we took a turn on the lake; after which, the wind having rather lulled, permitted our seeing, at a considerable depth, a few waves of foam. This was the spring of the Neva, above which our boat rode.

When the west wind drives back the waters of the lake, the channel which serves as its outlet remains almost dry, and then this beautiful spring is fully exposed. On such occasions, which are fortunately very rare, the inhabitants of Schlusselburg know that Petersburg is under water. The news of such catastrophe never fails to reach them on the morrow; for the same west wind which causes the reflux of the waters of Lake Ladoga, and leaves dry the channel of the Neva near its source, drives also, when it is violent, the waters of the Gulf of Finland into the mouth of the river. The course of this stream is therefore stopped, and the water, finding its passage obstructed by the sea, makes a way by overflowing Petersburg and its environs.

When I had sufficiently admired the site of Schlusselburg, sufficiently surveyed, with a spy glass, the position of the battery which Peter the Great raised to bombard the strong fort of the Swedes, and sufficiently praised every thing which scarcely interested me, I said, in the most careless manner imaginable, "Let us go and see the interior of the fortress:" —"its situation appears extremely picturesque," I added, a little less adroitly; for in matters of finesse it is, above all, necessary to avoid overdoing any thing. The Russian cast upon me a scrutinising look, of which I felt the full force. This diplomatic mathematician answered:

"The fortress, sir, possesses no object of curiosity for a foreigner."

"Never mind: every thing is curious in so interesting a land as yours."

"But if the governor does not expect us, we shall not be suffered to enter."

"You can ask his permission to introduce a traveller into the fortress; besides, I rather believe he does expect us."

In fact we were admitted at the first application of the engineer; which leads me to surmise that my visit, if not announced as certain, was indicated as probable.

We were received with military ceremony, conducted under a vault, through a gate ill defended, and after crossing a court overgrown with grass, we were introduced into—the prison? Alas! no: into the apartments of the governor. He did not understand a word of French, but he received me with civility, affecting to take my visit as an act of politeness of which he himself was the object, and expressing to me his acknowledgments through the engineer, accordingly. These crafty compliments were by no means satisfactory. There I was, obliged to talk to the wife of the commandant, who spoke little more French than her husband, to sip chocolate, in short, to do every thing except visit the prison of Ivan—that imaginary prize, for whose sake I had endured all the toils, the artifices, and the wearisome civilities of the day.

At length, when the reasonable time for a call had expired, I asked my companion if it was possible to see the interior of the fortress. Several words and significant glances were hereupon exchanged between the commandant and the engineer, and we all left the chamber.

I fancied myself at the crowning point of all my

labours. The fortress of Schlusselburg is not picturesque: it is a girdle of Swedish walls of small elevation, and the interior of which forms a kind of orchard, wherein are dispersed several very low buildings; including a church, a house for the commandant, a barracks, and the dungeons, masked by windows the height of which does not exceed that of the rampart. Nothing announces violence or mystery. The appearance of this quiet state prison is more terrible to the imagination than to the eye. Gratings, drawbridges, battlements, and all the somewhat theatrical apparatus of the castles of the middle ages, are not here to be seen. The governor commenced by showing me the *superb monuments of the church!* The four copes which were solemnly displayed before me cost, as the governor himself took the trouble to say, thirty thousand roubles. Tired of such sights, I simply asked for the tomb of Ivan VI. They replied by showing me a breach made in the wall by the cannon of the Czar Peter, when he conducted in person the siege of the key of the Baltic.

"The tomb of Ivan," I continued, without suffering myself to be disconcerted, "where is it?" This time they conducted me behind the church, and, pointing near to a rose brier, said, "It is here."

I conclude that victims are allowed no tomb in Russia.

"And the chamber of Ivan," I continued with a pertinacity which must have appeared as singular to my guides, as their scruples, reserve, and tergiversations appeared to me.

The engineer answered in a low voice that they could not show the chamber of Ivan, because it lay

in a part of the fortress then occupied by state prisoners.

The excuse was legitimate; I had expected it; but what surprised me was the wrath of the commandant. Whether it was that he understood French better than he spoke it, or that he had only feigned ignorance of our language, he severely reprimanded my guide, whose indiscretion, he added, would some day ruin him. This, the latter, annoyed with the lecture he had received, found a favourable opportunity of telling me, stating also that the governor had warned him, in a very significant manner, to abstain henceforward from speaking of *public* affairs, and from introducing foreigners into state prisons. This engineer has all the qualities necessary to constitute a good Russian; but he is young, and does not yet understand the mysteries of his trade — it is not of his profession as an engineer that I speak.

I found it was necessary to yield; I was the weakest, and therefore, owning myself vanquished, I renounced the hope of visiting the room where the unhappy heir of the throne of Russia died imbecile, because it was found more convenient to make him an idiot than an emperor. I cannot sufficiently express my astonishment at the manner in which the Russian government is served by its agents. I remember the countenance of the minister of war, the first time that I ventured to testify a wish to visit a castle that had become historical by a crime committed in the times of the Empress Elizabeth; and I compare, with a wonder mixed with fear, the disorder of ideas that reigns among us, with the absence of all private views, of all personal opinion — the blind

submission, in short, which forms the rule of conduct among all, whether heads or subordinates, who carry on the administration of affairs in Russia. The unity of action observable in this government astounds me. I admire while I shudder, in noticing the tacit accord with which both superior and inferior *employés* act in making war against ideas and even events. At the time, this sentiment made me as impatient to leave the fortress of Schlusselburg as I had been eager to enter it. I began to fear lest I should become by force one of the inmates of that abode of secret tears and unknown sorrows. In my ever-increasing sense of its oppressive influence, I longed only for the physical pleasure of walking and breathing beyond its limits. I forgot that the country into which I should return was in itself a prison; a prison whose vast size only makes it the more formidable.

A Russian fortress! — this word produces on the imagination an impression very different to that which is felt in visiting the strongholds of people really civilised, sincerely humane. The puerile precautions taken in Russia to hide what are called secrets of state confirms me, more than would open acts of barbarity, in the idea that this government is nothing more than a hypocritical tyranny.

After having myself penetrated into a Russian state prison, and found there the impossibility of speaking of things which every stranger would naturally inquire about in such a place, I argue with myself that such dissimulation must serve as mask to a profound inhumanity: it is not that which is commendable that people conceal with so much care.

I am assured, on good authority, that the sub-

marine dungeons of Kronstadt contain, among other state prisoners, miserable beings who were placed there in the reign of Alexander. These unhappy creatures are reduced to a state below that of the brute, by a punishment the atrocity of which nothing can justify. Could they now come forth out of the earth, they would rise like so many avenging spectres, whose appearance would make the despot himself recoil with horror, and shake the fabric of despotism to its centre. Every thing may be defended by plausible words, and even by good reasons: not any one of the opinions that divide the political, the literary, or the religious world, lacks argument by which to maintain itself: but, let them say what they please, a system, the violence of which requires such means of support, must be radically and intensely vicious.

The victims of this odious policy are no longer men. Those unfortunate beings, denied the commonest rights, cut off from the world, forgotten by every one, abandoned to themselves in the night of their captivity, during which imbecility becomes the fruit, and the only remaining consolation of their never-ending misery, have lost all memory, as well as all that gift of reason, that light of humanity, which no one has a right to extinguish in the breast of his fellow-being. They have even forgotten their own names, which the keepers amuse themselves by asking with a brutal derision, for which there is none to call them to account; for there reigns such confusion in the depths of these abysses of iniquity, the shades are so thick, that all traces of justice are effaced.

Even the crimes of some of the prisoners are not

recollected; they are, therefore, retained for ever, because it is not known to whom they should be delivered, and it is deemed less inconvenient to perpetuate the mistake than to publish it. The bad effect of so tardy a justice is feared, and thus the evil is aggravated, that its excess may not require to be justified. Infamous pusillanimity, which is called expediency, respect for *appearances*, prudence, obedience, wisdom, a sacrifice to the public good, a reason of state! Words are never wanted by oppressors; and are there not two names for everything that exists under the sun? We are unceasingly told that there is no punishment of death in Russia. To bury alive is not to kill! In reflecting on so many miseries on one side, and so much injustice and hypocrisy on the other, the guilt of the prisoners is lost sight of, the judge alone seems criminal. My indignation is at its height, when I consider that this iniquitous judge is not cruel by choice. To such extent may a bad government pervert men interested in its duration! But Russia marches in advance of her destiny. This must explain all. If we are to measure the greatness of the end by the extent of the sacrifices, we must, without doubt, prognosticate for this nation the empire of the world.

On returning from my melancholy visit, a new labour awaited me at the engineer's: a ceremonious dinner with persons of the middle classes. The engineer had gathered around him, in order to do me honor, his wife's relations and a few of the neighbouring landholders. This society would have interested me as an observer, had I not at the first moment perceived that it would furnish me with no new ideas.

There is no citizen class in Russia, but the petty employés and the small, though ennobled, landed proprietors, represent there the middle orders of other lands. Envying the great, and themselves envied by the little, these men vainly call themselves nobles. They are exactly in the position of the French *bourgeois* before the revolution; the same data produce everywhere the same results.

I felt that there reigned in this society a hostility, ill disguised, against real greatness and true elegance, to whatever land they might belong.

That starchness of manners, that acrimony of sentiment, ill concealed under an air of preciseness and propriety, recalled to my mind only too well, the epoch in which we live, and which I had a little forgotten in Russia, where I had hitherto only seen the society of courtiers. I was now among aspiring subalterns, uneasy as to what might be thought of them, and these people are the same every

The men did not speak to me, and to take little notice of me; they did and French, beyond perhaps being able to with difficulty; they therefore formed a circle ner of the room, and talked Russian. One females of the family bore all the weight of th ch conversation. I was surprised to find that they re acquainted with all that portion of our literature that the Russian police suffers to penetrate into their land. The toilette of these ladies, who, with the exception of the mistress of the house, were all elderly, was wanting in taste; the dress of the men was yet more negligent; large brown topcoats, almost trailing upon the ground, had taken the place

of the national costume. But what surprised me more than their careless attire, was the caustic and captious tone of their conversation. The Russian feeling, carefully disguised by the tact of the higher orders, exhibited itself here openly. This society was more candid, though less polite, than that of the court; and I clearly saw what I had only felt elsewhere, namely, that the spirit of curiosity, sarcasm, and carping criticism influences the Russians in their intercourse with strangers. They hate us as every imitator hates his model; their scrutinising looks seek faults in us with the desire of finding them. As soon as I recognised this disposition I felt no inclination to be indulgent myself. I had thought it necessary to offer a few words of excuse for my ignorance of the Russian tongue, and I finished my speech by remarking that every traveller ought to know the language of the country he visits, as it is more natural that he should give himself the trouble of learning to speak the language of those whom he seeks, than of imposing upon them the trouble of speaking as he does.

This compliment was answered by the observation, that I must nevertheless resign myself to hearing French murdered by the Russians, unless I would travel as a mute.

"It is of this I complain," I replied; "if I knew how to murder Russian as I ought to do, I would not force you to change your habits in order to speak my language."

"Formerly we spoke only French."

"That was wrong."

"It is not for you to reproach us."

"I invariably speak my real opinions."

"Truth, then, is still thought something of in France?"

"I cannot tell; but I know that it ought to be loved for its own intrinsic merits."

"Such love does not belong to our age."

"In Russia?"

"No where; and especially in no country governed by newspapers."

I was of the same opinion as the lady, which made me desirous of changing the conversation, for I would not speak contrary to my own sentiments, nor yet acquiesce with those of a person who, when she even thought with me, expressed her views with a causticity that was capable of disgusting me with my own.

An incident occurred very *a-propos* to turn the conversation. A sound of voices in the street attracted everybody to the window: it was a quarrel among boatmen, who appeared outrageous in their anger. The conflict was likely to become bloody, when the engineer showed himself upon the balcony, and the sight alone of his uniform produced a miraculous effect. The rage of these rude men calmed, without its being necessary to address them a single word; the courtier, the most perfectly broken in to falsehood, could not have better disguised his resentment.

"What an excellent people!" cried the lady who had undertaken to entertain me.

"What pitiable beings," I thought, as I re-seated myself, for I shall never admire the miracles of fear. However, I deemed it wiser to be silent.

"Order is not so easily re-established in your

country," continued my indefatigable enemy, never ceasing to scrutinise me with her inquisitive eyes.

This impoliteness was new to me. In general, I had found the manners of the Russians too obliging for the malignity of mind which I could detect under their fine phrases; here I recognised an accord between the sentiments and their expression, that was yet more disagreeable.

"We have among us the inconveniences of liberty; but we have also the advantages," I replied.

"What are they?"

"They would not be understood in Russia."

"They can be dispensed with."

"As can every thing else that is not known."

My adversary was piqued, and sought to hide her vexation by suddenly changing the subject of discourse.

"Is it of your family that Madame de Genlis speaks so much in the *Souvenirs of Felicia*, and of your person in her Memoirs?"

I answered in the affirmative, and then expressed my surprise that these books were read at Schlusselburg.

"You take us for Laplanders," retorted the lady, with that tone of acrimony which I had not succeeded in softening, and which began to react upon me, until I had nearly reached the same diapason.

"No, madame, but for Russians who have something better to do than to occupy themselves with the gossip of French society."

"Madame de Genlis is no gossip."

"Yet such of her writings as those in which she does no more than gracefully relate the little anec-

dotes of her times, can only, it appears to me, be interesting to the French."

"You do not wish that we should make much of you and your writers."

"I wish that we should be valued for our real merit."

"If the influence that you have exercised over Europe in matters of social intercourse were taken from you, what would be left you?"

I felt that I had to deal with a powerful adversary. "There would remain to us the glory of our history, and even that of the history of Russia; for this empire owes only its new influence in Europe to the energy with which it avenged itself for the conquest of its capital by the French."

"It is true that you have immensely aided us, without wishing to do so."

"Did you lose any dear friend in that war?"

"No, monsieur."

I had hoped that the aversion against France, which was betrayed by every word in the conversation of this rude lady, would be explained to me by some too legitimate cause of resentment, but my expectation was deceived.

The conversation, which could not become general, was carried on in this manner until dinner. I sought to turn it to our new school of literature, but Balzac alone had been read. He was infinitely admired, and fairly judged. Almost all the works of our modern authors are prohibited in Russia, which proves the influence attributed to them. At last, after a long delay, we seated ourselves at table. The lady of the house, ever faithful to her part as a statue, made

that day but one movement: she transported herself, without turning her eyes or opening her lips, from her sofa in the drawing room to her chair in the dining-room. This change of position, performed spontaneously, proved to me that the idol had legs.

The dinner did not pass over without constraint, but it was not long, and appeared to me sufficiently good, with the exception of the soup, the originality of which passed all bounds. This soup was cold, and consisted of pieces of fish, which swam in a broth of strong, highly-seasoned, and highly-sweetened vinegar. With the exception of this infernal ragout, and of the sour quarss, a species of beer which is a national beverage, I ate and drank with good appetite. There was excellent claret and champagne on the table, but I saw clearly that they had put themselves out on my account, which produced mutual formality and constraint. The engineer did not participate in this feeling; though a great man at his sluices, he was nothing at all in his own house, and left his mother-in-law to do its honours, with the grace of which the reader may judge.

At six in the evening my entertainers and myself parted, with a satisfaction that was reciprocal, and, it must be owned, ill-disguised. I left for the castle of ——, where I was expected. The frankness of the fair plebeians had reconciled me to the mincing affectations of certain great ladies. One may hope to triumph over affectation, but natural dispositions are invincible.

It was yet light when I reached ——, which is six or eight leagues from Schlusselburg. I spent there the rest of the evening, walking, in the twilight, in a

garden, which, for Russia, is very handsome, sailing in a little boat on the Neva, and enjoying the refined and agreeable conversation of a member of the fashionable circles. What I have seen at Schlusselberg will make me cautious how I place myself again in a position where it is necessary to face such interrogations as I submitted to in that society. Such drawing-rooms resemble fields of battle. The circles of fashion, with all their vices, seem preferable to this petty world, with all its precise virtues.

I was again in Petersburg soon after midnight, having travelled during the day about thirty-six leagues through sandy and miry roads, with two sets of hired horses.

The demands upon the animals are in proportion to those made upon the men. The Russian horses seldom last more than eight or ten years. The pavement of Petersburg is as fatal to them as it is to the carriages, and, it may be said, to the riders, whose heads nearly split as soon as they are off the few wooden roads that can be found. It is true that the Russians have laid their detestable pavement in regularly-figured compartments of large stones,—an ornament which only increases the evil, for it makes riding in the streets yet more jolting. A certain appearance of elegance or magnificence—a boastful display of wealth and grandeur, is all that the Russians care for: they have commenced the work of civilisation by creating its superfluities. If such be the right way of proceeding, let us cry, "*Long live vanity, and down with common sense!*

CHAP. XXI.

PHILOSOPHY OF ADIEUS. — IMAGINATION. — A TWILIGHT SCENE IN PETERSBURG. — NORTHERN MYTHOLOGY. — GOD IN NATURE. — THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD. — LITERARY CANDOUR. — THE BRIDGE OF NEVA AT NIGHT. — PETERSBURG COMPARED TO VENICE. — THE GOSPEL DANGEROUS. — RELIGION IN RUSSIA. — JANUS. — NEW POLAND. — THE FUTURE. — A DELAY. — HISTORY OF THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS TROUBETZKOI. — DEVOTION OF THE PRINCESS. — FOURTEEN YEARS IN THE URALIAN MINES. — MERCY OF THE EMPEROR. — THE CHILDREN OF A CONVICT. — COLONISATION IN SIBERIA. — A MOTHER'S ANGUISH. — SECOND PETITION TO THE EMPEROR, AND HIS ANSWER. — A FINAL OPINION ON THE CHARACTER OF THE EMPEROR. — THE FAMILY OF THE EXILES. — CHANGE IN THE AUTHOR'S PLANS. — MEANS TAKEN FOR DECEIVING THE POLICE.

I HAVE bid adieu to Petersburg. — Adieu is a magical word! It invests places as well as persons with an attraction previously unknown. Why has Petersburg never appeared to me so beautiful as on this evening? It is because I have seen it for the last time. The mind, rich in illusions, has the power of metamorphosing the world, the image of which is to us never anything more than the reflection of our inward life. Those who say that nothing exists beyond ourselves, are perhaps right; but I, prone to philosophy without wishing to be so, metaphysical without any other pretension than that of allowing the natural bent of my thoughts to take their course, inclining ever towards insolvable questions, doubtless

I am unwise in seeking to account to myself for this incomprehensible influence. The torment of my mental faculties, the chief faults of my style, are produced by the necessity of defining the undefinable: my powers lose themselves in the pursuit of the impossible; my words suffice no better than my sentiments or my passions. Our dreams, our visions, are, as compared with clear precise ideas, what a horizon of brilliant clouds is to mountains; whose chains it sometimes imitates betwixt heaven and earth. No modes of expression can clearly define and fix these fugitive creations of the phantasy, which vanish under the pen of the writer, as the brilliant pearls of a clear stream escape from the nets of the fisherman.

What is it that can be added to the real beauty of a place by the idea that we are about to quit it? In thinking that I behold it for the last time, I feel as though I saw it for the first.

Our destiny is so movable as compared with the destiny of things, that whatever recalls to us the shortness of our days inspires us with a renewed admiration. This sentiment of respect for things that last longer than do we, leads us to reflect upon ourselves. The stream that we are descending is so rapid that the objects we leave on the banks seem beyond the influence of time. The waters of the cascade must believe in the immortality of the tree that overshadows them; and the world seems to us eternal, so rapidly are we passing through its varied scenes.

Perhaps the reason that the life of the traveller is so full of emotions is because the departures of which it is composed are but rehearsals of death. Herein, doubtless, lie the reasons for our discovering beauty in

that which we abandon; but there is another reason which I scarcely venture here to dwell upon.

In certain minds the necessity for independence becomes a passion. The fear of forming ties operates in such manner that we attach ourselves only to things from which we flee, because the attraction that we feel towards such objects binds us to nothing. We experience raptures without any further results. We depart: to depart is to perform an act of liberty. By absence we disengage ourselves from the fetters of sentiment; man enjoys in full security the pleasure of admiring that which he will never see more; he abandons himself to his preferences or his affections without fear or constraint: he knows that he has wings! But when he feels that through constantly expanding and folding them, they are beginning to wear out, when he discovers that travelling instructs him less than it fatigues him, then is the hour for return and repose arrived: I can perceive that this hour is approaching for me.

It was night. Obscurity, like absence, has its illusion; like it, it forces us to conjecture. Towards the end of the day the mind abandons itself to reverie, the heart opens to sensibility and to regret. When all that we see disappears, there remains for us only what we feel: the present dies, the past revives; death and earth restore their prey, and night, rich in shade, drops over the varied objects an atmospheric veil which magnifies them and makes them appear more tenderly beautiful; obscurity, like absence, enthrals the mind by means of incertitude; it summons the vagueness of poetry in aid of its enchantments: night, absence, and death are magicians,

and their power is a mystery like every thing else that acts upon the imagination. Imagination in its relations with nature, in its effects, in its illusive influences, will never be defined satisfactorily by minds even the most subtle and the most sublime. Clearly to define imagination would be to mount up to the fountain head of the passions. Source of love, channel of pity, moving element of genius, most tremendous of all the endowments of man — for it makes of him a new Prometheus, — imagination is the strength of the Creator lent for one moment to the creature. Man receives it, but he cannot scan it: it is in him, but it is not of him. When the voice ceases to warble, when the rainbow melts away, whither are the sounds and the colours fled? Can any one say whence they came? Similar in their nature, although yet more incomprehensible, more varied, more fugitive, and above all, more disquieting, are the illusions of imagination! I have felt the power of this faculty all my life with an unavailing awe; I have far too much of it for the use I make of it; I sought to render myself its master; I remain its victim and its toy. Abyss of desires and contradictions, it is it which still urges me to traverse the world, and which attaches me to places at the very moment when it is summoning me elsewhere. O illusions! how perfidious are you when you seduce us, and how cruel when you abandon us!

It was past ten o'clock when I returned from the promenade of the Islands. At that hour the aspect of the city has a singular and not easily described effect; for the beauty of the picture does not consist in the lines, since the site is entirely flat, it lies in

the magic of the vapoury nights of the North; though vapoury, luminous, and — though it cannot be understood without seeing them — full of poetic majesty.

On this evening the disposition of the light was such as to involve the west of the city in obscurity, though the heaven above was clear; whilst in the east, everything on earth was brightly illuminated, and stood in white relief against a dark sky. This contrast produced to the eye an effect that words could render but very imperfectly. The slow melting of the tints of twilight, which appeared to perpetuate the day in struggling against an ever-increasing gloom, communicated to all nature a mysterious movement; the low lands of the city, with their structures little raised above the banks of the Neva, seemed to oscillate betwixt the sky and the water, which gave the impression of their being about to vanish in the void.

Holland, although it enjoys a better climate and a richer vegetation, might convey an idea of some of the streets of Petersburg, but this would only be by day-light, for the polar nights teem with apparitions of wonder all their own. Several of the towers and steeples of the city are, as I have already said, surmounted with lofty turrets, which resemble the masts of vessels; at night, these ornaments of the Russian public buildings, gilded according to the national custom, seem to float in the expanse, and, when not lost in the shade, shine with a thousand reflections similar to the glossy scales of the lizard.

It is now the beginning of August, the end of summer in these latitudes, nevertheless a small portion of the heavens remains luminous the whole night. This glory of mother-of-pearl, set in the horizon, is

reflected in the calm stream or rather lake of the Neva, which, thus irradiated, resembles an immense plate of bright metal, a silver plain, only separated from a sky as white as itself, by the dim miniature of a city. That little spot of earth which seems to detach itself from the water and to tremble upon it like the froth of an inundation, those small dark irregular points scarcely observable between the white of the sky and the white of the river, can they form the capital of a vast empire?—or rather, is it not all an optical illusion, a phantasmagoria?

The spire of the cathedral church in which are deposited the remains of the last sovereigns of Russia, rises blackly against the white curtain of heaven. This taper spire, soaring above the fortress and the city, has the effect of the too hard and too bold pencil-stroke given by a painter in a moment of intoxication. A stroke which would spoil a picture may embellish the reality. God does not paint as we do. The whole scene was beautiful;—scarcely any movement, but a solemn calm, a vague inspiration. All the sounds and bustle of ordinary life were interrupted; man had disappeared, the earth remained in the possession of the supernatural powers. There are in these remains of day, these unequal and dying lights of a boreal night, mysteries which I know not how to define, and which explain to me the mythology of the North. I can now understand all the superstitions of the Scandinavians. God hides himself in the light of the pole as much as he manifests himself in the blazing noon-tide of the tropics. All places and all climates are beautiful in the eyes of the wise man who seeks only in creation to discover the

Creator. To whatever corner of the earth the restlessness of my heart may impel my steps, it is ever the same God whom I admire, the same voice that I interrogate. Wherever man casts down a religious eye, he recognises in nature, a body of which God is the soul. The spectre of a sleeping city reminds me of that ballad of Coleridge, in which the English seaman beholds the phantom of a vessel gliding across the sea. These nocturnal illusions are to the inhabitants of the polar regions what the Fata Morgana, in broad day, is to the men of the South: the colours, the lines, and the hour are different; the illusion is the same.

In contemplating with emotion one of the countries of the earth in which nature is the most naked, and where she is considered the least worthy of admiration, I love to dwell upon the consolatory idea that God has dispensed to each point of the globe beauties that enable his children to recognise Him everywhere by indubitable signs, and to recognise also that they owe Him thanks, in whatever zones his providence may have called them to live. The features of the Creator are imprinted upon every portion of the earth, which is thus rendered sacred to the eye of man. Each locality has its soul, according to the poetical expression of Jocelyn. I can never tire of a scene which speaks to me. It may be the same burden unceasingly repeated, yet each time it conveys the idea of something new. The lessons that I can thus draw, suffice for the modest aspirations of my life. A taste for travel is, with me, neither a pretence, a fashion, nor a consolation. I am born a traveller as others are born diplomatists. To me, my country is every spot

that I admire, every place in which I recognise God in his works; and of all the works of God, that which I understand the most easily is the aspect of nature, and its affinities with the creations of art. God there reveals himself to my soul through the indefinable relations established between His eternal Word and the fugitive thoughts of man. This contemplation, ever the same, yet ever new, is the food of my mind, the secret and the apology of my life; it employs both my moral and my intellectual powers; it occupies my time, and absorbs my spirit. Yes, in the melancholy yet delicious isolation to which my vocation as pilgrim condemns me, curiosity takes the place of ambition, power, standing and career. These reveries, I am aware, do not belong to my years. M. de Chateaubriand was too great a poet to describe to us a Réné growing old. The lassitudes of youth excite sympathy: its future supplies the place of energy and of hope; but the resignation of Réné grown hoary would scarcely add to eloquence. The fate of myself, an humble gleaner in the field of poetry, is to show how a man grows old who was born to die young: a subject more sad than interesting, an ungrateful task. Nevertheless, I will say everything without timidity and without scruple, because I affect nothing. Called by my character, which has made my destiny, to contemplate the life of others rather than to live myself, if I were to be refused the privilege of reverie, under pretext that I have enjoyed too long this intoxication of children and of poets, I should be robbed before the time of the gift which God had imparted for my existence. But what would become of society, it may be said, if every one acted

as I do? Strange fear of the votaries of the age! They are ever dreading lest their idol should be abandoned. I do not propose to preach to them, and yet I would recal to the minds of these enlightened beings, that the worst of all the forms of intolerance is the intolerance of philosophy.

I cannot live the life of the world because its interests, its objects, or, at least, the means it employs to defend and to attain them, present nothing that might inspire me with that salutary emulation without which a man is conquered in the very outset of those struggles of ambition or of virtue which constitute the life of society. There, success is involved in the working out of two conflicting problems; to conquer our rivals, and to make those rivals proclaim our victory. Herein lies the difficulty of obtaining a conquest, and the, almost, impossibility of maintaining it.

I renounced the aim even before the age of discouragement. Since the day for ceasing to struggle must soon close, I had better not commence it. It was thus that my heart spake, as I called to mind the beautiful expression, "All that ends is short." Under this feeling I suffered to pass by, without envy as without contempt, the train of bold and ardent jostlers who believe that the world is theirs because they are the world's.

Suffer me then to make my escape, without allowing yourselves to fear that eager combatants will ever be wanted in the struggles of this world, and allow me to extract all the advantage that I am able out of my leisure and my indifference; besides, may not inaction be only apparent, and may not the intellect profit by

its liberty to observe more attentively, and to reflect with less distraction?

The man who observes society from a distance is more lucid in his judgments than he who exposes himself, throughout his life, to the rough contact of the political machine. Men of action observe only by memory, and think only of describing when they have retired from the scene; and then, soured by disappointment, or feeling their end approaching, fatigued, or still a prey to fits of hope, the futile return of which is an inexhaustible source of deception, they almost always keep to themselves the treasures of their experience.

Had I been taken to Petersburg by the course of business, should I have seen in so short a time the reverse of things as I now see it? Shut up in the circles of diplomatists, I should have surveyed this land from their point of view, I should have devoted all my thoughts to the affair in hand, I should have been interested in conciliating their good will by the utmost facility of manners; and all this management could not have operated for any length of time without reacting upon the judgment of him who was under its constraint. I should have ended by persuading myself that on many points I thought as they thought, were it only to excuse myself in my own eyes for the weakness of speaking as they spoke. Opinions that you dare not refute, however ill-founded you may find them at first, will finally modify your own; when politeness is carried so far as to become blindly tolerant, it is a treason against self; it perverts the views of the observer, whose business it is to represent persons and things not as he would have

them to be, but as he actually sees them. And yet, notwithstanding all the independence on which I plume myself, I am often forced, for the sake of my personal safety, to sooth the rude self-love of this jealous nation, for all semi-barbarous people are suspicious. Let it not be supposed that my opinions on Russia and the Russians will surprise the diplomatic strangers who have had the leisure or the taste to study this empire: their opinions are the same as mine, though they will not confess it openly. Happy is the observer who is so situated that no one may have the right of reproaching him with an abuse of confidence! At the same time, I do not disguise from myself the inconveniences of my liberty: to labour in the cause of truth, it is not sufficient that we perceive it; we must manifest it also to others. The fault of hermit minds is that they are too much influenced by their emotions while changing at each moment their point of view, for the solitude of the mind is favorable to the power of imagination, and this power causes it to be easily moved.

But there are readers who can and ought to extract advantage out of my apparent contradictions, by discerning, through my capricious and movable pictures, the exact shapes of persons and of things. Few writers are courageous enough to leave the reader to perform a part of their task; few dare brave the reproach of inconsistency rather than charge their conscience with an affected merit. When the experience of the day has falsified the conclusions of the previous evening, I do not fear to show it. With the sincerity which I profess, my travels become my confessions. The men whose opinions are formed in

advance, are all method, all order, and they consequently escape minute criticism; but those who like me, say what they feel without troubling themselves as regards what they have felt, must expect to pay the penalty of their careless candour. This ingenuous and superstitious respect for truth is no doubt a flattery to the reader, but it is a flattery dangerous in the present day; and I sometimes, therefore, fear that the world in which we live cannot be worthy of the compliment.

I shall, in this case, have risked everything to satisfy the love of truth, a virtue which no one possesses, and by my imprudent zeal in sacrificing to a divinity which has no longer a temple, in taking an allegory for a reality, I shall miss the glory of the martyr and pass only for a simpleton. In a society where falsehood always obtains its reward, good faith is necessarily punished. The world has its crosses on which to nail every truth.

To meditate on these and many other matters, I stopped for a long time on the middle of the great bridge of the Neva. I wished to engrave in my memory the two different pictures which, by simply turning round, without leaving my place, I could enjoy.

In the east was the dark sky and the bright earth, in the west the clear sky and the earth involved in shade: in the opposition of these two faces of Petersburg there was a symbolic meaning, into which I fancied I could penetrate. In the west I saw the ancient, in the east, the modern Petersburg; the past, the old city, was shrouded in night—the new, the future city, was revealed in radiance.

Petersburg appears to me less beautiful than Ve-

nice, but more extraordinary. They are both colossi raised by fear. Venice was the work of unmixed fear; the last Romans preferred flight to death, and the fruit of their fear became one of the world's wonders. Petersburg is equally the result of terror, but of a pious terror, for Russian policy has known how to convert obedience into a dogma. The Russian people are accounted very religious; it may be so: but what kind of religion can that be which is forbidden to be taught? They never preach in the Russian churches. The gospel would proclaim liberty to the Slavonians.

This fear of things being understood, which they desire should be believed, seems to me suspicious. The more reason and knowledge contract the sphere of faith, and the brighter that divine light, thus concentrated in its focus, becomes; the less people believe, the more fervent is their belief. Signs of the cross are no proofs of devotion; and, notwithstanding their genuflexions and other external evidences of piety, the Russians, in their prayers, seem to me to think more of their emperor than their God. "Awake me when you come to the subject of God," said an ambassador, about to be put to sleep in a Russian church by the imperial liturgy.

Sometimes I feel ready to participate in the superstition of this people. Enthusiasm becomes contagious when it is or appears to be general; but the moment the symptoms lay hold of me, I think of Siberia, that indispensable auxiliary of Muscovite civilisation, and immediately I recover my calmness and independence.

Political faith is more firm here than religious faith; the unity of the Greek church is only apparent: the sects, reduced to silence, dig their way under-

ground; but nations will only remain mutes for a time; sooner or later the day of discussion must arrive, religion, politics, all will speak and explain themselves at last. Whenever the right of speech shall be restored to this muzzled people, the astonished world will hear so many disputes arise, that it will believe the confusion of Babel again returned. It is by religious dissensions that a social revolution will be one day brought about in Russia.

When I approach the emperor and see his dignity and beauty, I admire the marvel. A man like him is rarely seen any where, but on the throne he is a phœnix. I rejoice in living at a time when such a prodigy exists, for I take as much pleasure in showing respect as others do in offering insult.

Nevertheless, I examine, with scrupulous care, the objects of my respect, from whence it results that when I closely consider this personage, distinguished from all others upon earth, I fancy that his head has two faces like that of Janus, and that the words violence, exile, oppression, or their full equivalent — Siberia, are engraved on the face which is not presented towards me. This idea haunts me unceasingly, even when I speak to him. It is in vain that I strive only to think of what I say to him; my imagination, in spite of myself, travels from Warsaw to Tobolsk, and that single word, Warsaw, revives all my distrust.

Does the world know that, at the present hour, the roads of Asia are once again covered with exiles, torn from their hearths and proceeding on foot to their tomb, as the herds leave their pastures for the slaughter-house? This revival of wrath is attributable to

a pretended Polish conspiracy, a conspiracy of *youthful madmen*, who would have been heroes had they succeeded; and who, their attempt being desperate, only appear to me the more generously devoted. My heart bleeds for the exiles, their families, and their country. What will be the result when the oppressors of this corner of the earth, where chivalry once flourished, shall have peopled Tartary with all that was most noble and courageous amongst the sons of ancient Europe? When they have thus crowned their icy policy, let them enjoy their success. Siberia will have become the kingdom and Poland the desert.

Ought not we to blush with shame to pronounce the name of liberalism, when we think that there exists in Europe a people who were independent, and who now know no other liberty but that of apostasy? The Russians, when they turn against the west the arms which they employ successfully against Asia, forget that the same mode of action which aids their progress against the Calmucs, becomes an outrage of humanity when directed against a people that have been long civilised.

The scenes on the Volga continue; and these horrors are attributed to instigations of Polish emissaries; an imputation that reminds one of the justice of the wolf of La Fontaine. These cruelties and reciprocal iniquities are preludes to the convulsions of the coming result, and suffice to apprise us of its character. But in a nation governed like this, passions boil a long time before they explode; the peril may be increasing, yet the crisis is still distant, and the evil meanwhile continues: perhaps our grandchildren will not see the explosion; which, notwithstanding,

we can now prognosticate as inevitable, though we cannot predict the time and the season.

We may not cease to repeat that the Russian revolution, when it does come, will be the more terrible, because it will be in the name of religion. The Russian policy has melted the church into the state, and confounded heaven and earth: a man who sees a god in his master, scarcely hopes for paradise, except through the favour of the emperor.

I shall never get away. Fate seems to interfere. Once more a delay — yet, this time, it is a legitimate one. I was just preparing to enter my carriage when a friend insisted upon seeing me. He brought a letter, which he would have me read at the very moment. But what a letter, gracious God! It is from the Princess Troubetzkoi, who addresses it to a member of her family charged to show it to the emperor. I wished to copy it in order to print it without changing a syllable, but this I was not permitted to do. "It would go the round of the whole earth," said my friend, alarmed by the effect which it produced upon me.

"The greater reason to make it known," I replied.

"Impossible. The safety of several individuals would be compromised; besides, it has only been lent me in order to show you on your word of honour, and on condition that it shall be returned in half an hour."

Unhappy land, where every stranger appears as a saviour in the eyes of a herd of oppressed beings, merely because he represents truth, publicity, and liberty among a people deprived of all these blessings.

Before alluding to the contents of this letter, it will be necessary to recount, in a few words, a lamentable

history. The principal facts will be known to many, yet vaguely, like every thing else that is known of a distant country, in which people only take a cold interest. Let the public read and blush, — yes, blush; for whoever has not found means to protest, with his utmost power, against the policy of a country where such acts are possible, is to a certain extent an accomplice and a responsible party. I sent back the horses by my feldjäger, under pretext of indisposition, and told him to state at the establishment of the Posts that I should not leave until the morrow. Once rid of this officious spy, I sat down to write.

The Prince Troubetzkoi was condemned as a convict to hard labour, fourteen years ago. He was at that time young, and had taken a very active part in the revolt of the fourteenth December.

The first object of the conspirators on that occasion was to deceive the soldiers as regards the legitimacy of the Emperor Nicholas. They hoped, by the error of the troops, to produce a military revolt, and to profit by this, in order to work a political revolution, of which, fortunately or unfortunately for Russia, they alone at that time felt the necessity. The number of these reformers was too limited to afford any chance that the troubles excited by them could end in the result proposed. The conspiracy was defeated by the presence of mind of the Emperor, or rather by the intrepidity of his countenance. That prince, on the first day of his authority, drew from the energy of his bearing all the future power of his reign.

The revolution thus crushed, it was necessary to

proceed to the punishment of the culpable. The Prince Troubetzkoi, one of the most deeply implicated, unable to exculpate himself, was sentenced to labour in the Uralian mines for fourteen or fifteen years, and for the remainder of his life was exiled to Siberia, among one of those distant colonies that malefactors are destined to people.

The prince had a wife whose family was among the most distinguished in the land. This princess could not be dissuaded from following her husband to his tomb. "It is my duty," she said, "and I will fulfil it; no human power has a right to separate a wife from her husband; I will share the fate of mine."

This noble wife obtained the favour of being buried alive with her unhappy partner. I am astonished, since I have seen Russia and the spirit of its government, that, influenced by a lingering relic of shame, they have thought it right to respect this act of devotion during a period of fourteen years. That they should favour patriotic heroism is very natural, for they profit by it; but to tolerate a sublime virtue that does not accord with the views of the sovereign was an act of remissness for which they must have often reproached themselves. They feared the friends of Troubetzkoi; an aristocracy, however enervated it may be, always preserves a shadow of its independence,—a shadow that serves to cast a cloud over despotism. Contrasts abound in this dreadful society; many men speak among themselves as freely as if they lived in France: this secret liberty consoles them for the public slavery which forms the shame and the curse of their land.

From the fear then of exasperating certain influential families, the government yielded to a kind of prudent compassion. The princess departed with her husband the convict, and, which is more extraordinary, she reached her destination. The journey was alone a frightful trial: hundreds, — thousands of leagues in a telega, a little open cart without springs, over roads that break both carriages and human bodies. The unhappy woman supported these and many other hardships and privations, which I shall not describe for want of the precise details; for I wish to add nothing to the strict truth of this history.

Her conduct will appear the more heroic when it is known that, until the husband's ruin, the married pair had lived somewhat coldly together. But is not a fervent devotion a substitute for love? Or rather, is it not love itself? Love flows from many sources, and of these, self-sacrifice is the most abundant.

They had never had children at Petersburg; they had five in Siberia.

This man, rendered glorious by the generosity of his wife, had become a sacred object in the eyes of all who approached him. Who indeed would not venerate the object of an affection so sacred?

However criminal the Prince Troubetzkoi may have been, his pardon, which the Emperor will perhaps never grant, for he believes that he owes it both to his people and himself to maintain an implacable severity, has been doubtless accorded by the King of Kings. The almost supernatural virtues of a wife could appease the wrath of a God, they could not

disarm human justice. The reason is, that Divine Omnipotence is a reality, whilst that of the Emperor of Russia is a fiction.

He would have long since pardoned the criminal had he been as great as he pretends to be; but clemency, independently of its being repugnant to his natural disposition, appears to him a weakness by which a king would degrade the kingly office: habituated as he is to measure his power by the fear which he inspires, he would regard mercy as a violation of his code of political morality.

For my part, I only judge of a man's power over others by that which I see him exercise over himself, and I cannot believe his authority safely established, until he can venture to forgive: the Emperor Nicholas ventures only to punish. Pardon might be a dangerous example to a people who are still so rude in the depths of their hearts. The prince lowers himself to the level of his savage subjects; he hardens himself with them; he does not fear to brutalise them in order to attach them: people and sovereign emulate each other in deceptions, prejudices, and inhumanity. Abominable combination of barbarism and weakness, interchange of ferocity, circulation of falsehood which warms the life of a monster!—a cadaverous body whose blood is poison. Such is despotism in its essence and its action.

The husband and wife have lived for fourteen years by the side, so to speak, of the Uralian mines; for the arms of a labourer like the prince are little suited to the work of the pick-axe. He is there for the sake of being there, and that is all: but he is a con-

vict, and we shall soon see to what this condition condemns a man — *and his children!*

There is no lack of good Russians in Petersburg, and I have met some, who view the life of the convicts at the mines as very bearable, and who complain of the exaggeration with which the *modern makers of fine speeches* describe the sufferings of the traitors in the Uralian mountains. They own that they are not allowed to receive any money, but their relations are suffered to send them provisions. Provisions! there are few that could be forwarded so great a distance, without being rendered unfit for use. But the courtiers of the executioner always find the punishment too merciful for the crime.

However great may be the luxuries of life in Siberia, the health of the Princess Troubetzkoi is injured by her sojourn at the mines. It is difficult to understand how a woman accustomed to all the delicacies of life in the highest ranks of a luxurious capital, has been able to support so long the privations of every kind to which she has voluntarily submitted. She wished to live, she did live — she even gave life; she reared her offspring under a zone where the length and the rigour of winter seem to us inimical to existence. The thermometer falls there, yearly, to a temperature that might alone suffice to destroy the human race. But this saint-like woman had other cares to think of.

At the conclusion of seven years of exile, as she saw her infants growing around her, she thought it her duty to write to one of her family to beg that they would humbly supplicate the Emperor to suffer them to be sent to Petersburg, or to some other

civilised city, in order to receive a suitable education.

The petition was laid at the feet of the Czar, and the worthy successor of the Ivans and of Peter I. answered that the children of a convict, — convicts themselves, would always be sufficiently learned!

After this answer, the family — the mother and the condemned man, — were silent for seven more weary years. Humanity, honour, Christian charity, outraged religion, alone pleaded in their favour; but this was done silently: not a voice was raised to appeal against such *justice*. Nevertheless, a renewal of misery has now called forth a last cry from the depths of this abyss.

The prince has completed his term of labour in the mines, and now the exiles, liberated, as they call it, are condemned to form, they and their young family, a colony in the most remote corner of the desert. The locality of their new residence, *designedly* chosen by the Emperor himself, is so wild that the name of that howling wilderness is not even yet marked on the ordnance maps of Russia, the most exact and minute geographical maps that exist.

It will be easily understood that the condition of the princess (I name her only) is more wretched since she has been permitted to inhabit this solitude. It should be observed that in the language of the oppressed, as interpreted by the oppressor, permissions are obligatory. At the mines, she could find warmth in the bosom of the earth, her family had companions in misfortune, silent consolers, admiring witnesses of her heroism. The human eye contemplated and respectfully deplored her martyrdom, a circum-

stance which, externally, rendered it the more sublime. Hearts beat in her presence, — in short, without even having to speak, she felt herself in society; for let governments do their worst, pity will still spring to life wherever there are men. But what hope can there be of awakening the sympathy of bears, or of melting eternal ices amid impenetrable woods, or marshes that have no bounds? What means can there be found of excluding the mortal cold from a hovel? — and how is subsistence for five children to be obtained a hundred leagues, perhaps more, from any human abode, unless it be that of the superintendant of the colonies? — for this is called colonising in Siberia!

What I admire as much as the resignation of the princess, is the eloquence, the ingenious tenderness she must have possessed, to overcome the resistance of her husband, and to succeed in persuading him that she was less to be pitied in suffering with him than she would be in Petersburg, surrounded with all the comforts and elegances of life. This triumph of devotion recompensed by success, for her husband finally consented, I view as a miracle of delicacy, of energy, and of sensibility. To know how to sacrifice self is as noble as it is rare, — to know how to accept such a sacrifice, is sublime.

At present this father and mother, abandoned in the desert, without physical powers, stript of every aid, lost to their fellow men, punished in their children, whose innocence only serves to aggravate their anguish, know not how to provide food for themselves and their little ones. These young convicts by birth, these pariahs of the imperial realm, if they have no longer a country, no longer a position in the commu-

nity, have yet bodies that need food and raiment. A mother, whatever dignity, whatever elevation of soul she may possess, could she see the fruit of her body perish rather than supplicate a pardon? No; she again humbled herself, and this time it was not through Christian virtue: the lofty woman was conquered by the despairing mother. She saw her children ill, and had nothing wherewith to administer to their wants. In this extreme misery, her husband, his heart withered by his misfortune, left her to act according to her impulse, and the princess wrote a second letter from her hut of exile. The letter was addressed to her family, but meant for the Emperor. This was to place herself at the feet of her enemy, to forget what she owed to herself; but who would think the less of her for doing so? God calls his elect to every species of sacrifice, even to the sacrifice of the most legitimate pride. The man who would understand life without recognising eternity, can only have seen the things of this world on their sunny side: he must have lived on illusions, as they would have me do in Russia. The letter of the princess has reached its destination, the Emperor has read it; and it was to communicate to me this letter that I was stopped at the moment of my departure. I cannot regret the delay. I have never read anything more simple and touching. Actions like the writer's can dispense with words; she uses her privileges as a heroine, and is laconic, even in imploring the life of her children. In a few lines, she states her situation, without declamation and without complaint; she concludes by imploring this single favour — the permission to live within reach of an apothecary, in order to be able to get

some medicine for her children when they are ill. The environs of Tobolsk, of Irkutsk, or of Orenburg, would appear to her paradise! In the concluding words of her letter, she ceases addressing herself to the Emperor, she forgets every thing except her husband. With a feeling and a dignity which would merit the pardon of the worst crime (and she is innocent of any; the monarch she addresses is all-powerful; God alone judges his acts!) "I am very miserable," she says; "but were it to come over again, I should do as I have done."

There was in the family of this woman an individual bold enough to dare to carry her letter to the Emperor, and even to support with an humble petition the request of a disgraced relative. He spoke only of that relative as a criminal, although, before any other being but the Emperor of Russia, a man would have gloried in avowing his relationship with so noble a victim of conjugal duty. Well! after fourteen years of continued vengeance, continued but not glutted — how can I moderate my indignation? to use gentler terms in recounting such facts would be to betray a sacred cause: let the Russians object against them if they dare; I had rather fail in respect to despotism than to misfortune. They will crush me if they can, but, at least, Europe shall know that a man to whom sixty millions of men never cease saying that he is omnipotent, revenges himself! — Yes, revenge is the proper name for such a justice! After fourteen years, then, of vengeance, this woman, whose misery had been ennobled by so much heroism, obtained from the Emperor Nicholas no other answer than the follow-

ing: — "I am astonished that any one again dares to speak to me (twice in fifteen years!) of a family, the head of which has conspired against me!" The reader may doubt this answer, — I could yet do so myself, and nevertheless I have clear proof of its truth.

The relations of the exiles, the Troubetzkoï, a powerful family, live at Petersburg, and they attend the court! Such is the spirit, the dignity, the independence of the Russian aristocracy! In this empire of violence, fear justifies every thing, — and yet more, it is the only merit that is sure to receive reward.

I have no more hesitation, no more uncertainty of opinion as regards the character of the Emperor Nicholas; my judgment of that prince is at length formed. He is a man of talent and of resolution; it needs that he should be, to constitute himself the gaoler of the third of the globe; but he wants magnanimity: the use that he makes of his power only too clearly proves this to me. May God pardon him! happily, I shall never see him again.

What heart would not bleed at the idea of the anguish of this unhappy mother? My God! if such be the destiny thou hast ordained upon earth for the sublimest virtue, show to it thy heaven, — open to it the gates thereof before the hour of death! Imagine what must be the feelings of this woman when she casts her eyes on her children; and when, aided by her husband, she labours to supply the education which they need! Education! it will be poison for those who have no names, but are marked and numbered like the beasts of the herd. Can the exiles deny all their recollections, all their habits, in order to hide

the misfortune of their position from the innocent victims of their love? Would not the native refinement of their parents inspire these young savages with ideas that they could never realise? What danger, what momentary torment for them, and what insupportable constraint for their mother! This mental torture, added to such a load of physical sufferings, haunts me like a hideous dream from which I cannot awake. Since yesterday morning it has pursued me incessantly, whispering at every moment of the day — What is the Princess Troubetzkoi now doing? — what is she saying to her children? — with what look is she watching over them? — what prayer is she addressing to God for these beings, damned ere they were born by the providence of the Russians? This punishment inflicted upon an innocent generation disgraces an entire people!

I shall finish my journey, but without going to Borodino; without being present at the arrival of the court at the Kremlin; without speaking more of the Emperor. What can I say of this prince that the reader does not now know as well as I? To form an idea of men and things in this land, it is necessary to remember that plenty of occurrences similar to the one I have related take place here, though they remain unknown. It required an extraordinary concurrence of circumstances to reveal to me the facts which my conscience obliges me here to record.

I am about to place in one sealed packet all the papers that I have written since my arrival in Russia, including the present chapter, and to deposit them in safe hands; things which are not easily found in Petersburg. I shall then finish the day by writing an

official letter, which will leave by the post to-morrow. In this, every thing will be so carefully praised and admired that I have rational hopes, the letter, seized on the frontier, will assure my tranquillity during the remainder of my journey. If my friends hear no more of me, they must suppose I am sent to Siberia: that journey could alone alter my intention as regards proceeding to Moscow, which intention will be delayed in execution no longer, for my feldjäger has just arrived to inform me that the post-horses will be at my door without fail to-morrow morning.

CHAP. XXII.

ROAD FROM PETERSBURG TO MOSCOW. — SPEED OF TRAVELLING. — A LIVONIAN. — PUNISHMENT OF A POSTILLION. — THE BEST MEANS OF GOVERNING. — ENGLISH CARRIAGES ON RUSSIAN ROADS. — THE COUNTRY PEOPLE. — ASPECT OF THE COUNTRY. — THE POST-HOUSE. — MOUNTAINS OF VALDAI. — COSTUME OF THE PEASANTRY. — RUSSIAN LADIES EN DESHABILLE. — SMALL RUSSIAN TOWNS. — TORJECK RUSSIAN LEATHER. — CHICKEN FRICASSEE. — A DOUBLE ROAD.

I AM writing at Pomerania, a post town eighteen leagues from Petersburg.

To travel post on the road from Petersburg to Moscow, is to treat one's self for whole days to the sensation experienced in descending the *montagnes Russes* at Paris. It would be well to bring an English carriage to Petersburg, if only for the pleasure of travelling on really elastic springs this famous road, the best chaussée in Europe, according to the Russians, and, I believe, according to strangers also. It must be owned that it is well kept, although hard, by reason of the nature of the materials, which broken as they are in tolerably small pieces, form, in encrusting over the surface, little immovable asperities, which shake the carriages to a degree that causes something to come out of place at every stage. As much time is thus lost as is gained by the speed at which they drive; for we rush along, in a whirlwind of dust, with the rapidity of a hurricane chasing the clouds

before it. An English carriage is very pleasant for the few first stages; but in the long run, the necessity of a Russian equipage to withstand the pace of the horses and the hardness of the road, is discovered. The rails of the bridges are formed of handsome iron balustrades, and the granite pillars which support them are carved with the imperial arms. This road is broader than those of England; it is also as even, although less easy; the horses are small, but full of muscle.

My feldjäger has ideas, a bearing, and a person, which prevent my forgetting the spirit which reigns in his country. On arriving at the second stage, one of our four horses fell on the road. Notwithstanding the advanced season, the middle of the day is still excessively hot, and the dust renders the air suffocating. It appeared to me that the horse had fallen under the influence of the heat, and that unless he were instantly bled, he would die. I therefore called the feldjäger, and taking from my pocket a case containing a fleam, I offered it to him, telling him to make prompt use of it if he wished to save the life of the poor brute. He answered, with a malicious phlegm, while declining the instrument I offered, that it was of no consequence, as we were at the end of the stage. Thereupon, without aiding the unfortunate coachman to disengage the animal, he entered the stable hard by, in order to prepare another set of horses.

The Russians are far from having, like the English, a law to protect animals from the ill-treatment of men. On the contrary, it is among them as necessary to plead the cause of the men, as it is in

London to plead the cause of the dogs and horses. My feldjäger would not believe in the existence of such a law.

This man, who is a Livonian by birth, fortunately for me, speaks German. Under the exterior of an officious civility and obsequious language, may be discovered much obstinacy and insolence. His figure is slim; his flaxen hair gives to his features an infantile appearance which belies their really dry and harsh expression. That of his eyes, more especially, is crafty and relentless. They are grey edged with almost white lashes; his thick eyebrows are very light, his forehead full but low; his skin would be fair were it not tanned by the constant action of the air; his mouth is finely formed, always closed, and the lips so small that they are not seen until he speaks. His clean and neatly-fitting uniform of Russian green, with a leather belt round his waist, buckled in front, gives him a certain air of elegance. He has a light step, but an extremely slow understanding.

Notwithstanding the discipline under which he has been bred, it can be perceived that he is not of Russian descent. The race, half Swedish, half Teutonic, which peoples the southern side of the Gulf of Finland, is very different from that either of the Finns or the Slavonians. The real Russians are, in their primitive endowments, more to be admired than the mixed populations that defend the frontiers of their land.

This feldjäger inspires me with but little confidence. Officially, he is my guide and protector; nevertheless I see in him only a disguised spy, and feel towards

him as towards one who might at any moment receive an order to become my gaoler.

I have already spoken of the mingled interchanges of politeness and brutality, of the bows and blows which the Russians practise among each other; here, among a thousand, is another example. The postillion who brought me to the post-house from whence I write, had incurred at the stage where he set out, by I know not what fault, the wrath of his comrade, the head hostler. The latter trampled him, child as he is, under his feet, and struck him with blows which must have been severe, for I heard them at some distance resounding against the breast of the sufferer. When the executioner was weary of his task, the victim rose, breathless and trembling, and without proffering a word, readjusted his hair, saluted his superior, and, encouraged by the treatment he had received, mounted lightly the box to drive me at a hard gallop four and a half or five leagues in one hour. The Emperor travels at the rate of seven. The trains on the railways would have to do their best to keep up with his carriage. What numbers of men must be beaten and horses killed, in order to render possible so amazing a velocity, and that for one hundred and eighty leagues in succession! Some pretend that the incredible rapidity of these journeys in an open carriage is injurious to the health; and that few lungs can stand the practice of cleaving the air so rapidly. The Emperor is so constituted that he can support every thing; but his son, who is less robust, suffers from the demands made upon his frame, under the pretext of fortifying it. With the character which his manners, expression, and language convey the

idea of his possessing, this prince must suffer mentally as well as physically. With reference to him may be applied the words of Champfort, —"In the life of man, an age inevitably arrives at which the heart must either break or harden."

The Russian people give me the idea of being men endowed with gentle dispositions, but who believe themselves born exclusively for violence. With the easy indifference of the Orientals they unite a taste for the arts, which is tantamount to saying that nature has given them the desire of liberty; whilst their masters have made them the machines of oppression. A man, as soon as he rises a grade above the common level, acquires the right, and, furthermore, contracts the obligation to maltreat his inferiors, to whom it is his duty to transmit the blows that he receives from those above him. Thus does the spirit of iniquity descend from stage to stage down to the foundations of this unhappy society, which subsists only by violence — a violence so great, that it forces the slave to falsify himself by thanking his tyrant; and this is what they here call public order; in other words, a gloomy tranquillity, a fearful peace, for it resembles that of the tomb. The Russians, however, are proud of this calm. So long as a man has not made up his mind to go on all-fours, he must necessarily pride himself in something, were it only to preserve his right to the title of a human creature.

By a spirit of reaction against the doctrines of Christianity, the world has become, especially during the last century, of one accord in extolling ambition, as though it were not the most cruel, the most unmerciful of the passions, and as though society were in

danger of lacking proud talents, greedy hearts, and domineering minds. But more particularly is ambition conceded to governments. It would seem as though the heads of the people were especially privileged to commit iniquity. For my part, I cannot perceive any moral difference between the unjust covetousness of a conquering nation and the attacks of an armed brigand. The sole distinction to be made between public and individual crimes is, that the one produces a great, the other a little evil.

The Russians excuse themselves in their own eyes under the idea that the government to which they submit is favourable to their ambitious hopes; but an object that can only be attained by such means must be bad. The people are an interesting race; I can recognise among those of the lowest orders a kind of intelligence in their pantomime, of suppleness and quickness in their movements, of ingenuity, pensiveness and grace in their countenances, which denote of good blood; but they are made beasts of b[illegible] Shall they persuade me that it is necessary to manure the soil with the carcasses of this human cattle, that the earth may fatten during ages, before she can produce generations worthy of reaping the glory which Providence promises the Slavonians? Providence forbids the commission of a small evil even in the hope of the greatest good.

I do not mean that they should, or that they could, in the present day, govern the Russians as they govern the other European lands; but I mean that numerous evils would be avoided, if the example of gentleness and lenity were given in the highest quarters. But what can be hoped from a nation of

flatterers, flattered by its sovereign? Instead of elevating them to his level, he lowers himself to theirs.

If the politeness of the court can influence the outward manners even of the lowest classes, is it not reasonable to suppose that an example of clemency given by an absolute prince, would inspire with the sentiments of humanity the hearts of his entire people?

Exercise severity against those who do evil, and, at the same time, gentleness towards those who suffer, and you will change your herd into a nation — a change difficult to effect no doubt, but is it not to execute things that would be impossible to others that you are declared and recognised all-powerful here below? The man who occupies the place of God upon earth ought to acknowledge no other possibility but that of doing evil. He is constrained to resemble Providence, in order to legitimate the power which he ascribes to himself.

You wish to govern the earth, as in the times of old, by conquest: you seek to possess by force of arms the countries which you can conveniently thus attack, and you strive to oppress the rest of the world by overawing it. The extension of power of which you dream is no more rational, than it is moral; and if God accords it to you it will be for the misfortune of the world.

I know too well, the earth is not the scene on which unmixed justice is to triumph. Nevertheless the principle remains immutable: evil is evil in itself, without regard to its results; whether it ministers to the loss or the aggrandisement of a people, to the for-

tune or misfortune of a man, it has always the same weight in the eternal balance. Neither the perversity of an individual nor the crimes of a government can ever coincide with the will of Providence. God can no more excuse the offences of a prince and his people than He can those of a captain of banditti and his troop. But if he has not willed guilty actions, the results of occurrences ever accord with the views of his justice; for this justice has willed the consequences, though it has not willed the crime. God is carrying on the education of the human race, and all education consists of a series of trials.

The conquests of the Roman empire have not shaken the Christian faith; the oppressive power of Russia will not prevent the same faith from subsisting in the hearts of the just. Faith will remain upon earth as long as will the inexplicable and the incomprehensible.

In a world where every thing is mystery, from the rise and fall of nations to the production and the disappearance of a leaf (in which leaf the microscope shows us as much of the intervention of God, as the telescope does in the heavens, or as great events do in history), faith strengthens herself by the experience of each day, for faith is the only light that comports with the necessities of a being surrounded with clouds, and who, in his own nature, cannot rise above doubt.

If we were destined to suffer the ignominy of a new invasion, the triumph of the conquerors would only prove to me the faults of the vanquished. In the eyes of a man who thinks, success is indicative of nothing, unless it be that the life of earth is not the

first* nor the last mode of human existence. Let us leave to the Jews their interested belief, and let us remember the words of Jesus Christ: *my kingdom is not of this world.*

These words, which so shock the feelings of the worldly man, we are obliged to repeat to ourselves at every step we take in Russia. At the sight of so many inevitable sufferings, of so many necessary cruelties, of so many unwiped tears, of so many iniquities, voluntary and involuntary, for here injustice pervades the very air; before the spectacle of these calamities spread, not over a family or a city; but over a race, a people inhabiting the third part of the globe, the mind, dismayed, is constrained to turn from earth, and to exclaim, "My God! it is true, thy kingdom is not of this world."

Alas! why have my words so little power? Why can they not equal in their energy the excess of a misery of which we can only show our sense by an excess of pity? The spectacle of this community, all of whose springs are stretched like the lock of a fire-arm whose trigger is about to be drawn, inspires me with a feeling of oppression that almost makes me dizzy.

Since I have lived in this country, and especially since I have known the heart of the man who governs it, I have felt a fever which I glory in; for if the air of tyranny suffocates me, if falsehood disgusts me, I must be born for something better, and the wants of my nature, too elevated to be satisfied in such societies as I contemplate here, predict for me and my

* Ni le premier ni le dernier mode de la vie humaine.

fellows a purer happiness. God has not endowed us with faculties intending them to remain unemployed; His decree has assigned to each his place from all eternity; our part is, not to render ourselves unworthy of the glory he reserves for us. All that is best in us has its end in Him.

The reader will wonder what it can be that has condemned him to the perusal of these reflections. An accident has happened to my carriage, which gives me leisure to record my thoughts.

Some leagues from this place I met a Russian of my acquaintance, who had been to visit one of his estates, and was returning to Petersburg. We stopped to talk for a short time. The Russian, after casting his eye over my carriage, began to laugh, and, pointing to its various complicated parts, said, "You see all these things, they will not keep together till you reach Moscow: foreigners who persist in using their own carriages when in our country, set out as you did, but return by the diligence."

"In going no farther than Moscow even?"

"No farther even than Moscow."

"The Russians told me that it was the best road in all Europe; I took them at their word."

"There are bridges yet wanting: the road in many parts requires mending; the highway has frequently to be left in order to cross temporary bridges of rude construction, and, owing to the carelessness of our drivers, the carriages of foreigners always break in these awkward places."

"My carriage is an English one, and its goodness has already been well tested by long journeys."

"They drive no where so fast as in Russia; the

carriages, under this rapid motion, go through all the movements of a vessel in a storm, the pitching and the rolling combined. To resist such strains on a road like this, even, but whose foundation is hard, it is necessary, I again repeat, that the carriages should be built in the country."

"You have still the old prejudice for heavy and massive equipages; they are not, however, the strongest."

"I wish you a pleasant journey: let me hear if your carriage reaches Moscow."

Scarcely had I left this bird of ill omen when a part of the axle broke. Fortunately, we were near the end of the stage, where I am now detained. I should mention that I have yet only travelled 18 leagues out of the 180. . . . I shall be obliged to deny myself the pleasure of fast driving, and am learning to say in Russian, "gently," which is just the opposite of the usual motto of Russian travellers.

A Russian coachman attired in his cafetan of coarse cloth, or if the weather is warm, as it is to-day, in his coloured shirt or tunic, appears, at first sight, like an oriental. In simply observing the attitude he assumes when placing himself upon his seat, we may recognise the grace of the Asiatic. In travelling post, the Russians drive from the box, dispensing with postillions, unless a very heavy carriage requires a set of six or eight horses, and even in that case one of the men mounts the box. The coachman holds in his hands a whole bundle of cords: these are the eight reins of the team, two for each of the four horses harnessed abreast. The grace, ease, agility, and safety with which he directs this picturesque set-out, the

quickness of his slightest movements, the lightness of his step when he reaches the ground, his erect stature, his manner of wearing his dress, in short, his whole person reminds me of the most naturally elegant people on the earth — the Gitanos* of Spain. The Russians are fair-complexioned Gitanos.

I have already noticed some female peasants less ugly than those seen in the streets of Petersburg. Their form invariably wants elegance, but their complexion is fresh and bright. At this season, their head-dress consists of an Indian handkerchief, tied round the head, and the ends of which fall behind with a grace that is natural to the people. They often wear a little pelisse reaching to the knees, drawn round the waist by a girdle, slit on each side below the hips, and opening in front so as to show the petticoat underneath. The appearance of this dress is tasteful, but it is their boots which disfigure the persons of the women. The leather is greasy, the feet are large and rounded at the toe, and the folds and wrinkles entirely conceal the shape of the legs: so clumsy are they, that it might be supposed the wives had stolen them from their husbands.

The houses resemble those that I described in the excursion to Schlusselburg, but they are not so elegant. The appearance of the villages is monotonous. A village consists always of two lines, more or less extended, of wooden cottages, regularly ranged at a certain distance backwards from the road, for, in general, the street of the village is broader than the embankment of the highway. Each cabin, con-

* Gipsies. — *Trans.*

structed of pieces of roughly-hewn wood, presents its gable to the street. All these habitations are of similar construction; but, notwithstanding their wearisome uniformity, an air of comfort, and even prosperity, appears to reign in the villages. They are rural without being picturesque. I breathe in them the calm of pastoral life, which is doubly agreeable after Petersburg. The country people are not gay or smiling, but they have not the miserable appearance of the soldiers and the dependents of the government. Among all the Russians, these are they who suffer least from the want of liberty. The labours of agriculture tend to reconcile man to social life whatever it may cost; they inspire him with patience, and enable him to support every thing, provided he is allowed to give himself up undisturbed to occupations which are so congenial to his nature.

The country that I have hitherto traversed is a poor, marshy forest, covered, as far as the eye can reach over a sterile plain, with miserable, stunted, and thinly-scattered birch and pine; there are neither cultivated lands nor thick flourishing plantations of wood to be seen. The cattle are of a wretched breed. The climate oppresses the animals as much as despotism does the men. It might be said that nature and society vie with each other in their efforts to render life difficult. When we think of the physical obstacles that had here to be encountered in order to organise a society, we have no longer a right to be surprised at any thing, unless it be that material civilisation is so far advanced as we perceive it to be among a people so little favoured by nature.

Can it be true that there are in the unity of ideas,

and the fixedness of things, compensations for even the most revolting oppression? I think not; but were it proved to me that this system was the only one under which the Russian empire could have been founded or maintained, I should answer by a simple question: was it essential to the destinies of the human race that the marshes of Finland should be peopled, and that the unfortunate beings brought there should erect a city marvellous to behold, but which is in reality nothing more than a mimicry of Western Europe? The civilised world has only gained from the aggrandisement of the Muscovites, the fear of a new invasion, and the model of a despotism without pity and without precedent, unless it be in ancient history.

The house in which I write exhibits a taste and neatness that contrast strangely with the nakedness of the surrounding country. It is both post-house and tavern, and I find it almost clean. It might be taken for the country-house of some retired, independent person. Stations of this kind, though not so well kept as that of Pomerania, are maintained at certain distances on the road, at the expense of government. The walls and ceilings of the one I am in are painted as in Italy; the ground floor, composed of several spacious rooms, very much resembles a restaurateur in one of the French provinces. The furniture is covered with leather; large sofas are every where to be found, which might serve as a substitute for beds, but I have had too much experience to think of sleeping or even of sitting on them. In Russian inns, not excepting those of the best description, all wooden furniture with stuffed cushions are so many hives where vermin swarm and multiply.

I carry with me my bed, which is a masterpiece of Russian industry. If I break down again before I reach Moscow, I shall have time to make use of this piece of furniture, and shall applaud myself for my precaution.

I am now writing at Yedrova, between Great Novgorod and Valdai. There are no distances in Russia — so say the Russians, and all the travellers have agreed to repeat the saying. I had adopted the same notion, but unpleasant experience obliges me to maintain precisely the contrary. There is nothing but distance in Russia; nothing but empty plains extending farther than the eye can reach. Two or three interesting spots are separated from each other by immense spaces. These intervals are deserts, void of all picturesque beauty: the high road destroys the poetry of the steppe; and there remains nothing but extension of space, monotony, and sterility. All is naked and poor; there is nothing to inspire awe as on a soil made illustrious by the glory of its inhabitants, — a soil like Greece or Judea, devastated by history, and become the poetical cemetery of nations; neither is there any of the grandeur of a virgin nature; the scene is merely ugly; it is sometimes a dry plain, sometimes a marshy, and these two species of sterility alone vary the landscape. A few villages, becoming less neat in proportion as the distance from Petersburg increases, sadden the landscape instead of enlivening it. The houses are only piles of the trunks of trees, badly put together, and supporting roofs of plank, to which in winter an extra cover of thatch is

sometimes added. These dwellings must be warm, but their appearance is cheerless. The rooms are dark, and tainted for want of air. They have no beds; in summer the inmates sleep on benches which form a divan around the walls of the chamber, and in winter, on the stove, or on the floor around it; in other words, a Russian peasant encamps all his life. The word *reside* implies a comfortable mode of life; domestic habits are unknown to this people.

In passing through Great Novgorod I saw none of the ancient edifices of that city, which was for a long time a republic, and which became the cradle of the Russian empire. I was fast asleep when we drove through it. If I return to Germany by Wilna and Warsaw, I shall neither have seen the Volkof, that river which was the tomb of so many citizens — for the turbulent republic did not spare the life of its children, — nor yet the Church of Saint Sophia, with which is associated the memory of the most glorious events of Russian history, before the devastation and final subjection of Novgorod by Ivan IV., that model of all modern tyrants.

I had heard much of the mountains of Valdai, which the Russians pompously entitle the Muscovite Switzerland. I am approaching this city, and, for the last thirty leagues, have observed that the surface of the soil has become uneven, though not mountainous. It is indented with numerous small ravines, where the road is so formed that we mount and descend the declivities at a gallop. It is only when changing horses that time is lost, for the Russian hostlers are slow in harnessing and putting-to.

The peasants of this canton wear a cap, broad and

flat at the top, but fitting very closely round the head; it resembles a mushroom; a peacock's feather is sometimes twisted round the band, and when the men wear a hat, the same ornament is also adopted. Instead of boots they most commonly have plats of reeds, woven by the peasants themselves, and worn as leggings fastened with packthread laces. They look better in sculpture than on the living man. Some ancient statues prove the antiquity of the attire.

The female peasants are rarely to be seen.* We met ten men for one woman. Such as I have noticed wear a dress that indicates a total absence of female vanity. It consists of a species of dressing-gown, very wide and loose, which fastens round the neck and reaches to the ground. A large apron of the same length, fastened across the shoulders by two short straps, completes their rustic and ungainly costume. They nearly all go barefoot; the wealthier wear the clumsy boots I have already described. Indian handkerchiefs or other pieces of stuff are bound closely round the head. The real national female head-dress is only worn on holydays. It is the same as that of the ladies of the court; a species, namely, of shako, open at the top, or rather a very lofty diadem, embroidered with precious stones when worn by the ladies, and with flowers in gold or silver thread when on the heads of the peasants. This crown has an imposing effect, and resembles no other kind of head-dress, unless it be the tower of the goddess Cybele.

The peasant women are not the only Russian

* But little more than a hundred years ago the Russian women never went abroad.

females who neglect their persons. I have seen ladies whose dress when travelling was of the most slovenly character. This morning, in a post-house where I stopped to breakfast, I encountered an entire family whom I had left in Petersburg, where they inhabit one of those elegant palaces which the Russians are so proud of showing to foreigners. There, these ladies were splendidly attired in the Paris fashions; but at the inn where, thanks to the new accident that had happened to my carriage, I was overtaken by them, they were altogether different persons. So whimsically were they metamorphosed that I could scarcely recognise them: the fairies had become sorceresses. Imagine young ladies whom you had only seen in elegant society, suddenly re-appearing before you in a costume worse than that of Cinderella; dressed in old nightcaps that might have once been white, extremely dirty gowns, neck-handkerchiefs that resembled ragged napkins, and old shoes in which they walked slipshod. It was enough to make a man fancy himself bewitched.

The fair travellers were attended by a considerable retinue. The multitude of lacqueys and waiting-women, muffled in old clothes still more loathsome than those of their mistresses, moving about in all directions, and keeping up an infernal noise, completed the illusion that it was the scene of a meeting of witches. They screamed and scampered here and there, drank and stuffed themselves with eatables in a manner that was sufficient to take away the appetite of the most hungry beholder; and yet these ladies could complain before me in an affected manner of the dirtiness of the post-house,—as if they had any right to find fault with slovenliness. I could have

imagined myself among a camp of gipsies, except that gipsies are without pretence or affectation. I, who pique myself on not being fastidious when travelling, find the post-houses established on this road by the government, that is, by the Emperor, sufficiently comfortable. I consider that I have fared well in them: a man may even sleep at night, provided he can dispense with a bed; for this nomade people are acquainted only with the Persian carpet or the sheep-skin, or a mat stretched upon a divan under a tent, whether of canvass or of wood, for in either case it is a souvenir of the bivouac. The use of a bed, as an indispensable article of furniture, has not yet been recognised by the people of Slavonian race: beds are rarely seen beyond the Oder.

Sometimes, on the borders of the little lakes which are scattered over the immense marsh called Russia, a distant town is to be seen; a cluster, namely, of small houses built of grey boards, which, reflected in the water, produce a very picturesque effect. I have passed through two or three of these hives of men, but I have only particularly noticed the town of Zimagoy. It consists of a rather steep street of wooden houses, and is a league in length; at some distance, on the other side of one of the creeks of the little lake on which it stands, is seen a romantic convent, whose white towers rise conspicuously above a forest of firs, which appeared to me loftier and more thickly grown than any that I have hitherto observed in Russia. When I think of the consumption of wood in this country, both for the construction and the warming of houses, I am astonished that any forests remain in the land. All that

I had hitherto seen were miserable thickets, scattered here and there, which could only serve to interfere with the culture of the soil.

I resume my pen at Torjeck. It is impossible to see far on plains, because every object is a barrier to the eye: a bush, a rail, or a building conceals leagues of land between itself and the horizon. It may also be observed that, here, no landscape engraves itself on the memory, no sites attract the eye, not one picturesque line is to be discovered. On a surface void of all objects or variety, there should at least be the hues of the southern sky; but they also are wanting in this part of Russia, where nature must be viewed as an absolute nullity.

What they call the mountains of Valdaï are a series of declivities and acclivities as monotonous as the heathy plains of Novgorod.

The town of Torjeck is noted for its manufactures of leather. Here are made those beautifully-wrought boots, those slippers embroidered with gold and silver thread, which are the delight of the *elegants* of Europe, especially of those who love any thing that is singular, provided it comes from a distance. The travellers who pass through Torjeck pay there for its manufactured leathers a much larger price than that at which they are sold at Petersburg or Moscow. The beautiful morocco, or perfumed Russian leather, is made at Kazan; and they say it is at the fair of Nijni that it can be bought most cheaply, and that a selection may be made out of mountains of skins.

Torjeck is also celebrated for its chicken fricassees. The Emperor, stopping one day at a little inn of this town, was served with a hash of fattened chickens,

which to his great astonishment he found excellent. Immediately the fricassee of Torjeck became celebrated throughout Russia.* The following is their origin. An unfortunate Frenchman had been well received and treated in this town by a female innkeeper. Before leaving he said to her, "I cannot pay you, but I will make your fortune," whereupon he showed her how to fricasee chickens. As good luck would have it, this precious recipe was, at least so it is said, first prepared for the Emperor. The innkeeper of Torjeck is dead; but her children have inherited her renown, and they maintain it.

Torjeck, when that town first breaks upon the view of the traveller, conveys the idea of a camp in the midst of an immense corn field. Its white houses, its towers and pavilion-shaped domes, remind him of the mosques and minarets of the East. Gilded turrets, round and square steeples, some ornamented with little columns, and all painted green or blue, announce the vicinity of Moscow. The land around is well cultivated. It is a plain covered with rye, which plain, though devoid of all other objects, I greatly prefer to the sickly woods that have wearied my eyes for the last two days. The tilled earth is at any rate fertile, and the richness of a country will lead us to forgive its want of picturesque beauty; but a tract that is sterile, and yet possesses none of the majesty of the wilderness, is of all others the most tedious to travel over.

* There is nothing which an Emperor of Russia could not bring into fashion in his country. At Milan, if the viceroy patronises an actor or singer, the reputation of the artist is at once lost, and he is hissed unmercifully.

I had forgotten to mention a singular object which struck me at the commencement of the journey.

Between Petersburg and Novgorod, I remarked, for several successive stages, a second road that ran parallel to the principal highway, though at a considerable distance from it. It was furnished with bridges and every thing else that could render it safe and passable, although it was much less handsome, and less smooth than the grand route. I asked the keeper of a post-house the meaning of this singularity, and was answered, through my feldjäger, that the smaller road was destined for waggons, cattle, and travellers, when the Emperor, or other members of the imperial family, proceeded to Moscow. The dust and obstructions that might incommode or retard the august travellers, if the grand route remained open to the public, were thus avoided. I cannot tell whether the innkeeper was amusing himself at my expense, but he spoke in a very serious manner, and seemed to consider it very natural that the sovereign should engross the road in a land where the sovereign is every thing. The king who said, "*I am France,*" stopped to let a flock of sheep pass; and under his reign, the foot passenger, the waggoner, and the clown who travelled the public road, repeated our old adage to the princes whom they met: "the high road belongs to every body:" what really constitutes a law is the manner in which it is applied.

In France, manners and customs have in every age rectified political institutions; in Russia the harshness of the institutes is increased in their application, so that, there, the consequences are worse than the principles.

CHAP. XXIII.

THE COUNTESS O'DONNELL. — BOY COACHMEN. — THE ROAD. — GRACEFULNESS OF THE PEOPLE. — DRESS OF THE WOMEN. — THE SEE-SAW. — BEAUTY OF THE FEMALE PEASANTS. — RUSSIAN COTTAGES. — CUSTOMS OF THE SERFS. — DEVOUT THIEVES. — WANT OF PRINCIPLE IN THE HIGHER CLASSES. — FEMALE POLITICIANS. — DOMESTIC HAPPINESS OF THE SERFS. — CASUISTICAL REFLECTIONS. — CONNECTION OF THE CHURCH AND STATE. — ABOLITION OF THE PATRIARCHATE OF MOSCOW. — FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SECTS AND A MOTHER CHURCH. — HISTORY OF A FOAL. — THE AUTHOR INJURED BY THE MORAL ATMOSPHERE. — NATIONAL MORAL RESPONSIBILITY. — DREAM OF A WAKING MAN. — FIRST VIEW OF THE VOLGA. — SPAIN AND RUSSIA COMPARED. — DEWS OF THE NORTH.

NOTE.

Milan, 1*st January*, 1842.

THREE years have not yet elapsed since this chapter was written as a letter to Madame, the Countess O'Donnell, and that lady exists no longer.

Alas! without fearing henceforward to compromise her by addressing to her my opinions of the singular country I am describing, hers is the only name that will appear among the letters that I publish.

It is the name of one of the most amiable and most intellectual women I have ever known; a woman, the most worthy of inspiring, and the most capable of feeling a true friendship. She knew how, at the same time, vigorously to fortify and gently to embellish the life of her friends: her intellect inspired her with the wisest counsels, her heart dictated the most lofty and energetic resolutions, while the liveliness of her wit rendered life pleasant to the most unhappy who approached her.

An avowed enemy of all affectation, she nevertheless bore

with weakness; she used with discernment the arms with which her natural penetration supplied her; she was just, even in the exercise of her wit; she ridiculed only the absurdities that were avoidable. Endowed with a judgment that was strong, although exempt from all pedantry, she rectified the prejudices of others with an address the more efficacious because well concealed. But for the sincerity of sentiment which influenced her in this benevolent work, her skilfulness and her delicacy of feeling might have been taken for art; but that art was the art of kindness and benevolence; she employed it to correct the faults and to redress the wrongs of others, without wounding the feelings of any.

When she believed it her duty, she could say severe truths, yet without injuring self-love: for, in her, frankness was felt as a proof of friendship. All that she showed of her character was agreeable, all that she concealed inspired attachment.

So rare a union of opposite qualities — so much solidity of character, liveliness of disposition, and kindness of heart — so happy a combination of sense and of gaiety, made her one of the models of those Frenchwomen who, with strong energy of character, concealed under graces of which they alone possess the secret, are, according to the influence of circumstances, fascinating coquettes or real heroines. It is revolutions which test the hearts, and which bring to light the hidden virtues.

Naturally obliging, she was happier in the good that she did, than in the services that were rendered to her; and yet — rarely seen faculty! — she had carried the delicacy of friendship to the point of knowing how to receive as well as to give; in other words, she had attained the perfection of sentiment.

Watching closely over her friends without ever wearying them by her solicitude, always severe with herself and patient towards others, resigned to their imperfections as to necessity, concealing, with a care precisely the contrary to that which other women take, a profound mental capacity under a graceful lightness of conversation, she saw men as they were, and yet viewed every thing on the bright side. Those who knew her, remember as well as I, the philosophy, the courage, and the promptitude with which she submitted to circumstances, and the penetration, yet generosity and charity, with which she

judged the character of others. Enlightened as regards the objects of her affections, she loved them in spite of their faults, which she only sought to conceal from the eyes of the world; she loved them in their successes and reverses, for she was devoid of envy, although jealous; and even jealousy, which is hated in others, was pardoned in her, for she was never jealous of advantages, but only of affections. This inquietude, exempt from all vanity, and from every thing that was exacting, disarmed and attached the proudest hearts: envy inspires contempt, jealousy deserves compassion.

Such was the woman to whom I wrote this letter just before entering Moscow. Had I been then told that before publishing it I should have to attach so melancholy a note, I should have had little heart for the remainder of my journey.

She was so beloved, so full of life, that it is difficult to believe in her death, even while weeping it. She survives in all our recollections, all our pleasures, all our griefs. It is not of myself alone that I speak; I speak for all those who have loved her, that is, for all who have well known her, and for her family, especially her mother, who resembles her; and I am sure, notwithstanding the distance that divides us, they will recognise their own sentiments in this expression of mine.*

ONCE again, a delay on the road, and always from the same cause!—we break down regularly every twenty leagues. Of a truth the Russian officer at Pomerania was a *gettatore!*

There are moments when, notwithstanding my protestations, and the reiterated word *tischné* (gently), the drivers proceed at a rate that obliges me to close my eyes in order to avoid giddiness. Among them, I have not seen one deficient in skill, and some of them possess a dexterity that is extraordinary. The

* Madame O'Donnell was daughter of Madame Sophie Gay, and sister of Madame Delphine de Girardin.

Neapolitans and the Russians are the first coachmen in the world; the best among them are old men and children: the children especially surprise me. The first time that I saw my carriage and my life about to be entrusted to the care of an infant of ten years old, I protested against such imprudence; but my feldjäger assured me it was the custom, and as his person was exposed as much as mine, I believed him. Our four horses, whose fiery eagerness and wild appearance were by no means adapted to re-assure me, set off at a gallop. The experienced child knew better than to endeavour to stop them; on the contrary, he urged them to their utmost speed, and the carriage followed as it best might. This pace, which accorded better with the temperament of the animals than the qualities of the calèche, was kept up throughout the stage, although at the end of the first verst the breathless horses began to tire, and the coachman to become the most impatient. Each time they relaxed their pace he applied the whip until they resumed their former speed. The emulation which easily establishes itself between four spirited animals, harnessed abreast, soon brought us to the end of the stage. These horses would rather die than give in. After observing their character, and that of the men who drive them, I soon perceived that the word *tischné*, which I had learned to pronounce with so much care, was utterly useless in this journey, and that I should even expose myself to accident if I persisted in checking the ordinary rate of driving. The Russians have the gift of equilibration; men and horses would lose their perpendicular in a slow trot. Their mode

of getting over the ground would greatly divert me if my carriage were of more solid construction, but at each turn of the wheels I expect it to fall to pieces; and we break down so often that my apprehensions are only too well justified. Without my Italian valet, who officiates also as wheelwright and smith, we should already have come to a stand-still. I cannot cease from admiring the air of nonchalance with which the coachmen take their seats; there is a grace about it far preferable to the studied elegance of civilised drivers. In descending the hills, they rise on their feet, and drive standing, the body slightly bent, the arms stretched forward, and the eight reins drawn well up. In this attitude, which may be seen in ancient bas-reliefs, they might be taken for charioteers of the circus. When thus driving, we rush through the air amid clouds of dust, and seem scarcely to touch the earth. The English springs cause the body of the coach to sway like a vessel in a heavy gale, and there appears then to be established between the will of man and the instinct of the animals, a relation which I cannot understand. It is not by a mechanical impulse that the equipage is guided! — there seems to be an interchange of thoughts and sentiments, an animal magic, a real magnetic influence. The coachman is miraculously obeyed; he guides his four steeds abreast as if they were but one horse. Sometimes he draws them together into scarcely more space than is commonly occupied by two wheelers; sometimes he so spreads them out that they cover the half of the high road. In point of civilisation, every thing is incomplete in Russia, because every thing is modern. On the finest road

in the world, there are still frequent interruptions; repairs going on, or temporary bridges in place of broken ones, which oblige us to turn off the road; this the driver does without for a moment slackening the pace. The road is also much obstructed by the little carts and waggons of carriers, ten of which are often guided by one man, who cannot possibly keep them all in line. Without great dexterity on the part of the Russian coachmen it would be difficult to find a passage through such moving labyrinths. The bodies of these carriers' carts resemble large casks cut in half lengthways, and open at the top; they are each drawn by one small horse, who, without much capacity as a draught horse, is full of courage and spirit, and will pull until he falls on the road: his life is, therefore, as short as it is devoted: in Russia, a horse twelve years old is a phenomenon.

Nothing can be more original, more different to what is seen elsewhere, than the various vehicles, the men, and the horses that are met on the highways of this country. Every thing that the people touch, wear, or carry, takes, unknown to themselves, a picturesque appearance: condemn a race of men, less naturally elegant, to make use of the houses, dress, and utensils of the Russians, and all these things would appear hideous; but here I find them, though foreign and unusual, striking and deserving of being painted. Oblige the Russians to wear the costume of the Paris workmen, and they would make something out of it agreeable to the eye, though never would a Russian have imagined an attire so devoid of taste. The life of this people is amusing, if not for

themselves, at least for a spectator; the ingenious turn of their minds has found means to triumph over the climate, and every other obstacle that nature has opposed to social existence in a desert without poetic imagery. The contrast of the blind political submission of a people attached to the soil, with the energetic and continual struggle of that same people against the tyranny of a climate hostile to life, their conquests over nature showing itself every moment under the yoke of despotism, present an inexhaustible store for lively pictures and serious meditations. To make a journey through Russia with full advantage, it would be necessary to be accompanied by a Montesquieu and a Horace Vernet.

In none of my travels have I so much regretted my little talent for sketching. Russia is less known than India: it has been less often described and pictorially illustrated; it is nevertheless as curious a country as any in Asia, even as relates to the arts, to poetry, and to history.

Every mind seriously occupied with the ideas which ferment in the political world, cannot but profit by examining, on the spot, a community, governed on the principles which directed the most ancient states named in the annals of the world, and yet, already imbued with the ideas that are common among the most modern and revolutionary nations. The patriarchal tyranny of the Asiatic governments, in contact with the theories of modern philanthropy, the character of the people of the East and West, incompatible by nature, yet united together by coercion in a state of society semi-barbarous, but kept in order by fear, present a spectacle that can be only seen in

Russia, and, assuredly, one which no man who thinks, would regret the trouble of going to contemplate.

The social, intellectual, and political state of present Russia is the result, and, so to speak, the *résumé* of the reigns of Ivan IV., surnamed, by Russia herself, the Terrible; of Peter the First, called the Great by the men who glory in aping Europe; and of Catharine II., deified by a people that dreams of the conquest of the world. Such is the formidable heritage over which the Emperor Nicholas holds sway—God knows to what purpose, and our posterity will know also!

I continue to meet, here and there, a few female peasants who are tolerably pretty, but I do not cease to exclaim against the ungraceful appearance of their costume. It is not by *their* attire that the taste for the picturesque, which I attribute to the Russians, must be judged. The dress of these women would spoil beauty the most perfect. They are, I think, the only females in the world who have taken it into their heads to make themselves a waist above instead of below the bosom. Their shapeless sacks rather than gowns, are drawn together close under the armpits. At the first sight, their entire person gives me the idea of a bale or large loose parcel, in which all the parts of the body are confounded together without care, and yet without liberty. But this costume has other inconveniences rather difficult to describe. One of the worst is, that a Russian female peasant could suckle her child over her shoulder, as do the Hottentots. Such is the inevitable deformity produced by a fashion which destroys the shape of the body. The Circassian females, who better understand the beauty

of woman and the means of preserving it, wear, from their years of childhood, a belt round the waist, which they never cast off.

I observed at Torjeck a variety in the toilette of the women, which perhaps deserves to be mentioned. The females of that town wear a short mantle of velvet, silk, or black cloth, a kind of pelerine which I have not seen elsewhere, it being, unlike any other sort of cape, entirely closed in front, and opening behind between the two shoulders. It is more singular than pretty or convenient; but singularity suffices to amuse a stranger: what we seek in travelling, are proofs that we are not at home; though this is just what the Russians will not comprehend. The talent of imitating is so natural to them, that they are quite shocked when told that their land resembles no other. Originality, which to us appears a merit, is to them the remains of barbarism. They imagine that after we have given ourselves the trouble of coming so far to see them, we ought to esteem ourselves very fortunate to find, a thousand leagues from home, a bad parody of what we have left behind through love of change.

The see-saw is the favourite amusement of the Russian peasants. This exercise developes their natural talent for adjusting the equilibrium of the body; in addition to which, it is a silent pleasure, and quiet diversions best accord with the feelings of a people rendered prudent by fear.

Silence presides over all the festivals of the Russian villagers. They drink plentifully, speak little, and shout less; they either remain silent, or sing in chorus, with a nasal voice, melancholy and prolonged

notes, which form a harmonious but by no means noisy accord. I have been surprised, however, to observe that almost all these melodies are deficient in simplicity.

On Sunday, in passing through populous villages, I observed rows of from four to eight young girls balancing themselves, by a scarcely perceptible movement of their bodies, on boards suspended by ropes, while, at a little distance beyond, an equal number of boys were fixed in the same manner, in face of the females. Their mute game lasted a long time; I have never had patience to wait its conclusion. Such gentle balancing is only a kind of interlude, which serves as a relaxation in the intervals of the animated diversion of their real swing or see-saw. This is a very lively game; it even renders the spectator nervous. Four cords hang from a lofty cross-beam, and, at about two feet from the earth, sustain a plank, on whose extremities two persons place themselves. This plank, and the four posts which support it, are placed in such a manner that the balancing may be performed either backwards and forwards or from side to side. The two performers, sometimes of the same, sometimes of the opposite sexes, place themselves, always standing, and with legs firmly planted, on the two extremities of the plank, where they preserve their balance by taking hold of the cords. In this attitude they are impelled through the air to a frightful height, for at every swing the machine reaches the point beyond which it would turn completely over, and its occupiers be dashed to the earth from a height of thirty or forty feet, for I have seen posts at least twenty feet high. The Russians, whose frames

are singularly supple, easily maintain a balance that is to us astonishing; they exhibit much grace, boldness, and agility, in this exercise.

I have purposely stopped in several villages to observe the girls and young men thus amuse themselves together; and I have at last seen some female faces perfectly beautiful. Their complexion is of a delicate whiteness; their colour is, so to speak, under the skin, which is transparent and exquisitively smooth. Their teeth are brilliantly white; and—rarely seen beauty!—their mouths are perfectly formed copies of the antique; their eyes, generally blue, have nevertheless the oriental cast of expression, with also that unquiet and furtive glance natural to the Slavonians, who can in general look sideways, and even behind, without turning their heads. Their whole appearance possesses a great charm; but, whether from a caprice of nature, or the effects of costume, these beauties are much less often seen united in the women than in the men. Among a hundred female peasants we perhaps meet with one really beautiful, whilst the great majority of the men are remarkable for the form of their heads, and the gracefulness of their features. Among the old men there are faces with rosy cheeks and silver hair and beard, of which it may be said that time has imparted of dignity more than it has taken of youth. There are heads that would be more beautiful in pictures than any thing that I have seen of Rubens' or Titian's, but I have never observed an elderly female face worthy of being painted.

I sometimes see a regularly Grecian profile united with features of so extreme a delicacy that the

expression of the countenance loses nothing by the perfect regularity of the lines. In such cases I am struck with unbounded admiration. The more common mould, however, of the features of both men and women is that of the Calmuc — high cheek-bones and flattened noses.

I have entered into several of the Russian cottages at the hour when the peasants retire to rest. These cabins are almost deprived of vital air, and have no beds: men and women lie stretched pellmell on the wooden benches which form a divan around the chamber; but the dirtiness of these rustic bivouacs has always arrested my progress; I have quickly retreated, though never speedily enough to avoid carrying away in my clothes some living memorial, as a punishment for my indiscreet curiosity.

As a protection against the short but fervent heats of summer, a divan, under a species of veranda, runs round some cottages, and serves as a bed for the family, who even sometimes prefer sleeping on the naked earth. Recollections of the East pursue the traveller everywhere. At all the post-houses into which I have entered at night, I have invariably found, ranged in the street before the door, numerous bundles of black sheep-skins. These fleeces, which I at first took for sacks, were men sleeping under the bright canopy of heaven. We have, this year, heats such as have not been known in the memory of man in Russia.

The sheep-skins, cut out as little over-coats, serve not only for clothes, but likewise for beds, carpets, and tents to the Russian peasants. The workmen, when, during the heat of the day, they take their

siesta in the fields, make a picturesque tent of these pelisses to protect themselves from the rays of the sun. With the ingenious address which distinguishes the Russian labourer from those of the west of Europe, they pass the sleeves of their coat over the two handles of their wheelbarrows, and then, turning this moveable roof towards the sun, they sleep tranquilly under the rustic drapery. The sheep-skin coats are graceful in shape, and would be pretty if they were not generally so old and greasy. A poor peasant cannot often renew a vesture which costs so much.

The Russian labourer is industrious, and is ready for every difficulty in which he may be placed. He never goes out without his small hatchet, which is useful for a hundred purposes in the hands of a dexterous man in a country which is not yet in want of woods. With a Russian by your side, were you to lose yourself in a forest, you would in a very few hours have a house to pass the night in, perhaps more commodious, and assuredly more clean, than the houses of the old villages. But if the traveller possessed small articles of leather among his baggage, they would be safe nowhere. The Russians steal, with the address which they exhibit on all occasions, the straps, girths, and leathern aprons of your trunks and carriages, though the same men show every sign of being extremely devout.

I have never travelled a stage without my coachman making at least twenty signs of the cross to salute as many little chapels. Ready to fulfil with the same punctilio his obligations of politeness, he salutes also with his hat every waggoner that he meets, and their number is great. These formalities

accomplished, we arrive at the end of the stage, when it is invariably found that either in putting to or detaching the horses, the adroit, pious, polite rogue has abstracted something, perhaps a leather pouch, a strap, or a wrapper; perhaps only a nail, a screw, or a wax candle from the lamps: in short, he never leaves with altogether *clean hands.*

These men are extremely greedy of money; but they dare not complain when ill paid, which has often been the case with those who have driven us the last few days, for my feldjäger retains for himself a portion of the postillion's fees, which, together with the hire of the horses for the entire journey, I paid him in advance at Petersburg. Having once observed this trick, I compensated out of my own pocket the unfortunate postillion, thus deprived of a part of the wages which, according to the ordinary custom of travellers, he had a right to expect from me; but the knavish feldjäger, having perceived my generosity (for this was the name he gave to my justice), had the audacity to complain to me openly,—saying that he could no longer act for me on the journey if I continued to thwart him in the legitimate exercise of his power.

But how can we be surprised at the want of proper feelings among the common people, in a country where the great regard the most simple rules of probity as laws proper for plebeians, but which cannot extend to persons of their rank? Let it not be supposed that I exaggerate, I state what I perceive: an aristocratic pride, degenerated in its character, and at variance with the true sentiment of honour, reigns in Russia among the greater number of influential families. Recently a great lady made to me, little knowing

it, an ingenuous confession: it the more surprised me, because such sentiments, sufficiently common here among the men, are less so among the women, who have generally preserved better than their husbands and brothers the traditions of just and noble feelings. "It is impossible for us," she said, "to form any clear idea of a social state like that of yours. They tell me that in France, at present, the highest noble can be put in prison for a debt of two hundred francs; this is revolting: how different from our country! There is not in all Russia a tradesman who would dare to refuse us credit for an unlimited period. With your aristocratic notions," she added, "you must surely find yourself more at home with us. There is greater similarity between the French of the old régime and us, than between any other of the European nations."

I cannot describe the effort of self-command that it required on my part to prevent myself from suddenly and loudly protesting against the affinity of which this lady boasted. Notwithstanding my obligatory prudence, I could not help saying, that a man who would now pass among ourselves for an ultra-aristocrat, might be easily classed at Petersburg with the violent liberals; and I concluded by observing, "When you assure me that, among your families, people do not think it necessary to pay their debts, I must not take you at your word."

"You are wrong: many of us have enormous fortunes, but they would be ruined if they were to pay all they owed."

In order to explain to me the extent to which the fashionable world is imbued with the French genius

and spirit, the same lady related to me instances of *impromptu* answers in verse, made in a game at the house of one of her relatives. "You see how completely French we are," she added, with a pride that awoke my inward risibility. "Yes, more so than we ourselves," I replied; and we changed the subject of discourse. I can picture to myself the astonishment of this Franco-Russian lady entering the *salons** of Madame ——, in Paris, and inquiring of our actual France what has become of the France of Louis XV.?

Under the Empress Catherine, the conversation of the palace, and of some of the nobility, resembled that of the saloons of Paris. In the present day our discourse is more serious, or, at least, more bold than that of any of the other European people; and, in this respect, our modern Frenchmen are far from resembling the Russians, for we talk of every thing, and the Russians speak of nothing.

The reign of Catherine is profoundly impressed on the memories of several Russian ladies. These fair *aspirantes* to the title of female statesmen have a talent for politics; and, as some of them add to that gift manners which altogether remind us of the eighteenth century, they are so many travelling empresses, filling Europe with the sound of their profligacy, but who, under this unfeminine conduct, conceal a commanding and profoundly observing mind. By virtue of the spirit of intrigue that distinguishes these Aspasias of the North, there is scarcely a capital in Europe without two or three Russian ambassadors:

* *The salons of a lady*, an expression newly borrowed from the restaurateurs by the people of the fashionable world.

the one, public, accredited, recognised, and clothed with all the insignia of office; the others, secret, irresponsible, and playing, in bonnet and petticoat, the double part of independent ambassador, and spy upon the official envoy.

In all ages, women have been employed with success in political negotiations. Many of our modern revolutionists have availed themselves of female aid to conspire more skilfully, more secretly, and more safely. Spain has seen these unfortunate women become heroines in the courage with which they have submitted to the punishment entailed by their tender devotion — for love always forms a great part of the courage of a Spanish woman.

Among the Russian women love is only the accessory. Russia possesses a completely organised female diplomacy; and Europe is not, perhaps, sufficiently attentive to so singular a means of influence. With its concealed army of amphibious agents, its political Amazons with acute masculine minds and feminine language, the Russian court collects information, obtains reports, and even receives advice, which, if better known, would explain many mysteries, furnish a key to many inconsistencies, and reveal many littlenesses.

The political preoccupation of mind of the greater number of Russian women renders their conversation, interesting as it might be, insipid. This is more especially the case with the most distinguished women, who are naturally the most absent when the conversation does not turn upon important subjects. There is a world between their thoughts and their discourse, from whence there results a want of accord, an absence of natural manner in short, a duplicity, that is

disagreeable in the ordinary relations of social life. Politics are, from their nature, but poor amusement; their tediousness is supported by a sense of duty, and sometimes, when statesmen speak, by flashes of mind which animate conversation; but the politics of the amateur are the curses of conversation.

I have been assured that the moral sentiment is scarcely developed among the Russian peasants, and my daily experience confirms the accounts that I have received.

A nobleman has related to me, that a man belonging to him, and skilful in some particular handicraft, had permission to remain in Petersburg, in order to exercise his talent there. After the expiration of two years, he was allowed to return for a few weeks to his native village to visit his wife. He came back to Petersburg on the day appointed.

"Are you satisfied with having seen your family?" asked his master. "Perfectly so," answered the workman, with great simplicity; "my wife has presented me with two more children in my absence, and the sight of them gave me great pleasure."

These poor people have nothing of their own; neither their cottages, their wives, their children, nor even their own hearts; they have, therefore, no jealousy. Of what could they be jealous?—Of an accident? Love among them is nothing better. Such, however, is the existence of the happiest men in Russia—the serfs! I have often heard the great express envy of their lot, and perhaps with good reason.

They have no cares, they say; we take all the charge of them and their families (God knows how this charge is acquitted when the peasants become old

and useless). Assured of the necessaries of life for themselves and their children, they are a hundred times less to be pitied than the free peasants are among you.

I did not reply to this panegyric on servitude; but I thought, if they have no cares, they have also no families, and therefore no affections, no pleasures, no moral sentiment, no compensation for the physical evils of life. They possess nothing; though it is individual property which makes the social man, because it alone constitutes the divisions of family.

Moral truth is the only principle that merits our devotion: to grasp it, all the efforts of the human mind tend, whatever may be their sphere of action. If, in my journeys, I take every pains to describe the world as it is, my object is to excite in the breasts of others, and in my own, regret that it is not as it should be, to arouse in human minds the sentiment of immortality, by recalling, at the sight of every injustice, every abuse inherent in the things of earth, the words of Jesus Christ, "My kingdom is not of this world."

Never have I had so frequent occasion to apply these words as since my sojourn in Russia; they occur to me at every moment. Under a despotism, all the laws are calculated to assist oppression; that is to say, the more the oppressed has reason to complain, the less has he the legal right or the temerity. Surely, before God, the evil actions of a free citizen are more criminal than the evil actions of a serf. He who sees every thing, takes into account the insensibility of conscience in the man debased by the spectacle of iniquity always triumphant.

It will be said that evil is evil, wherever committed; and that the man who steals at Moscow, is just as much a thief as the pickpocket in Paris. It is precisely this which I deny. On the general education that a people receives, depends in a great measure the morality of each individual; from whence it follows that a fearful and mysterious relativeness of merits and of demerits has been established by Providence between governments and subjects, and that moments arrive in the history of communities when the State is judged, condemned, and destroyed, as though it were a single individual.

The virtues, the faults, and the crimes of slaves have not the same signification as those of freemen; therefore, when I examine the character of the Russian people, I can assert as a fact which does not imply the same blame as it would with us, that in general they are deficient in spirit, delicacy, and elevation of sentiment, and that they supply the want of these qualities by patience and artifice.

"The Russian people are gentle," is often said to me. To this I answer, "I cannot give them any credit for being so: it is their habit of submission." Others say, "The Russian people are only gentle because they dare not show what is in their hearts; their fundamental sentiments are superstition and ferocity." To this I reply, "Poor creatures! they are so ill educated!"

From all that I see in this world, and especially in this country, I conclude that happiness is not the real object for which man was placed here upon earth. That object is purely religious in its character: it is moral improvement—the struggle and the victory.

But since the usurpations of the temporal authority, the Christian religion in Russia has lost its virtue; it is stationary, or at least moves as one of the wheel-works of despotism, and nothing more. In this country, where nothing is clearly defined, it is difficult to understand the actual relations of the church with the head of the state, who has made himself the arbiter of the faith, though without actually proclaiming such prerogative. He exercises it *de facto*, but he dares not claim it as a right; he has therefore preserved a synod, which is the last homage rendered by tyranny to the King of kings, and to His ruined church. The following is the account of this religious revolution in Evesque, whose History of Russia I have just been reading, while waiting for a blacksmith to repair another misfortune that has happened to my calèche.

"1721. Since the death of Adrian*, Peter had constantly deferred lending himself to the election of a new partriarch. Under a twenty-years' delay, the religious veneration of the people for this head of the church had insensibly cooled. The emperor at length believed that he might venture to declare the dignity abolished for ever. He divided the ecclesiastical power, formerly invested exclusively in the person of a chief pontiff, and caused all matters concerning religion to be brought under the jurisdiction of a new tribunal, called the Holy Synod.

"He did not declare himself head of the church, *but he* VIRTUALLY *became so*, by means of the oath which the members of the new ecclesiastical college

* The last patriarch of Moscow.—*Note of the Traveller.*

took. It was to this effect: 'I swear to be a faithful and obedient servant and subject of my natural and true sovereign. . . . *I acknowledge him to be the supreme judge of this spiritual college.*' The synod is composed of a president, two vice-presidents, and four assistants. These removable ecclesiastical judges are far from possessing, united, the power formerly enjoyed by the patriarch alone. They do not attend the councils, their names do not appear in the acts of the monarchy, they have not, even in the matters submitted to them, more than an authority subordinate to that of the sovereign. As no exterior signs distinguish them from the other prelates, and as their authority ceases as soon as they leave their tribunal, finally, as that tribunal itself presents nothing very imposing, they do not inspire the people with any particular veneration."

The Russian people are in our days the most believing among all the Christian nations: the chief cause of the little efficacy of their faith is easily seen. When the church abdicates its liberty, it loses its moral virtuality:—a slave, it can only give birth to slavery. It cannot be too often repeated that the only church really independent, is the Catholic church, which has alone preserved the trust of true charity. All the other churches form constituent parts of the state, which uses them as political instruments for maintaining its power. These churches are excellent auxiliaries of the government; complaisant towards the princes or magistrates who are the depositaries of the temporal power, hard upon the subjects, they call in Deity to aid the police. The immediate result is sure; it is good order in

society: but the Catholic church, quite as powerful politically, looks higher and reaches farther. The national churches make citizens; the church universal makes men. Among the sectarians, a respect for the church is confounded with a love of country; among the Catholics, the church and regenerated humanity are one and the same thing. In Russia, respect for authority continues still the only spring of the social machine. This respect is necessary, no doubt; but, in order radically to civilise the human heart, it is necessary to teach it something more than blind obedience.

The day when the son of the Emperor Nicholas—I say the son, for this noble task does not belong to the father, obliged as he is to spend his laborious reign in drawing closer the bonds of the old military discipline which constitutes the Muscovite government,—the day when the son of the Emperor shall have taught all the classes of this nation that he who commands owes respect to him who obeys, a moral revolution will be effected in Russia; and the instrument of that revolution will be the gospel.

The longer I stay in this country the more am I impressed with the fact that contempt for the weak is contagious. This sentiment is so natural here, that those who most severely blame it come finally to partake of it. I am myself a proof in question.

In Russia the desire of travelling fast becomes a passion, and this passion serves as a pretext for every species of inhumanity. My courier has communicated it to me, and I often render myself, without at the time perceiving it, an accomplice in his acts of injustice. He is exceedingly angry whenever the

coachman leaves his seat to readjust any portion of the harness, or when he stops on the road under any other pretext.

Yesterday evening, at the commencement of a stage, a child who drove us had been several times threatened with blows by the feldjäger for a fault of the kind, and I participated in the impatience and wrath of this man. Suddenly, a foal, not many days old, and well known by the boy, escaped from an inclosure bordering upon the road, and began neighing and galloping after my carriage, for he took one of the mares that drew us for his mother. The young coachman, already guilty of delay, wanted once again to stop and go to the aid of the colt, which he saw every moment in danger of being crushed under the wheels of the carriage. My courier angrily forbade him to leave his seat: the child obeyed like a good Russian, and continued to drive us at a gallop without proffering a complaint. I supported the severity of the feldjäger. I thought to myself, "It is necessary to sustain authority even when it is in fault; this is the spirit of the Russian government: my feldjäger is not over zealous; if I discourage him when he exhibits energy in performing his duty, he will leave every thing to come and go as it pleases, and be of no use to me at all: besides, it is the custom of the country; why should I be less in haste than another? my dignity as a traveller is involved; to have time to spare would be to lose my consequence in this country: here, to be important we must be impatient." While I was thus reasoning, night had come on. I accuse myself with having been more hard-hearted even than the Russians, (for I have not,

like them, the habits of early life as an excuse,) thus to leave the poor colt and the unhappy child to mourn in concert; the one by neighing with all his might, the other by crying silently — a difference which gave to the brute a real advantage over the human being. I ought to have interposed my authority to cause this double punishment to cease; but no, I assisted, I contributed to the martyrdom. It was a long one, for the stage was six leagues in length. The boy, obliged to torture the animal that he wished to save, suffered with a resignation that would have touched me, had not my heart been already hardened by my abode in this country. Every time that a peasant appeared on the road, the hope of rescuing his beloved foal again revived in the bosom of the child: he made signs from afar off; he shouted when a hundred paces distant from the foot-passenger, but not daring to slacken the unmerciful gallop of our horses, he never succeeded in making himself understood in time. If ever a peasant, more quick-sighted than the others, endeavoured of himself to turn the foal, the speed of the carriage disconcerted him, and the young animal passed on close to the flank of one of our horses. The case was the same in the villages, and at last the despair of our youthful coachman became so great, that he no longer opened his mouth. The persevering little animal, only eight days old, according to our driver, had the spirit and muscle necessary to perform six leagues at a gallop! *

When this was accomplished, our slave — it is of the boy that I speak — seeing himself at length released

* 2 4/10 miles English is a French *lieue de poste*. — *Trans.*

from the rigorous yoke of discipline, called the whole village to the rescue of the foal. The energy of this spirited little creature was so great, that, notwithstanding the fatigue of such a course, notwithstanding the stiffness of his limbs, ruined before they were formed, he was still very difficult to catch. They could only take him by driving him into a stable after the mare he had mistaken for his dam. When they had placed a halter round him, they shut him up with another mare, that gave him her milk; but he had not strength left to suck. Some said he would come round by and by, others, that he was foundered and could not live. I begin to understand a little Russian, and heard this sentence pronounced by one of the elders of the village. Our little coachman completely identified himself with the young animal. Foreseeing, no doubt, the treatment that the keeper of the foals would have to suffer, he appeared in as great a consternation as if he was himself to receive the blows with which his comrade would be overwhelmed. Never have I seen the expression of despair more profoundly imprinted on the face of a child; but not one look, not one gesture of reproach against my cruel courier, escaped him. So great an empire over self, so much restraint of feeling at such an age, inspired me with fear and pity.

Meanwhile the courier, without troubling himself for a moment about the foal, or taking the least notice of the disconsolate child, proceeded gravely to make the necessary arrangements for procuring a fresh relay.

On this road, which is the finest and the most frequented in Russia, the villages where relays may be

obtained are peopled with peasants purposely established there to attend to the posting. Upon the arrival of a carriage, the imperial director sends from house to house to seek for horses and a disengaged coachman. Sometimes the distances are great enough to cause a considerable delay to the traveller. I should prefer more promptness in the changing of horses, and a little less speed in the driving. At the moment of leaving the broken-down foal and the forlorn young postillion, I felt no remorse; it came only upon reflection, and especially upon recording the circumstances in writing: shame then awoke repentance. Thus easily may those who breathe the air of despotism be corrupted. What do I say? In Russia, despotism is only upon the throne, but tyranny pervades the country.

Education and circumstances considered, it must be acknowledged that a Russian lord, the most accustomed to submit to, and to exercise arbitrary power, could not have committed, in the seclusion of his province, an act of cruelty more blamable than that of which I yesterday evening rendered myself guilty by my silence.

I, a Frenchman, who believe myself to possess a naturally kind disposition, who have been educated under a civilisation of ancient date, who travel among a people of whose manners I am a severe observer,—lo! even I, upon the first opportunity for practising a petty act of unnecessary cruelty, yield to the temptation. The Parisian acts like a Tartar! The evil is in the atmosphere.

In France, where they respect life, even that of the brute creation, if my postillion had not thought

of rescuing the colt, I should have obliged him to stop. I should myself have appealed to the peasants for aid, and should not have proceeded on my journey until I had seen the animal in safety. Here, I have aided in destroying him by an unmerciful silence. Who would be proud of his virtues, when forced to acknowledge that they depend upon circumstances more than upon self?

A great Russian lord who, in his fits of passion, does not beat to death any of his peasants, merits praise: he is in such case humane; whilst I, a Frenchman, may be cruel for having simply suffered a foal to gallop on the road!

I have passed the night in meditating upon the great problem of relative virtues and vices, and I have concluded that a very important branch of political morals has not yet been sufficiently elucidated; an inquiry, namely, as to the share of merit or of responsibility which each individual has the right to claim or to disclaim, in his own actions, and the share which belongs to the society where he is born. If society be exalted by the great things performed by some of its members, it ought also to regard itself as implicated in the crimes of others. In this respect ancient society was more advanced than modern. The scapegoat of the Jews shows us to what point that people feared the responsibility of crime. With them, the penalty of death was not only punishment of the guilty, it was a public expiation, a protestation of the community against all participation in the crime, and in the motive that inspired it. This view serves to show us how social man has been able to arrogate the right of legally disposing of the life of his fellow-

creature: eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life; in short the law of retaliation was politic. A society that wishes to subsist must cast from its bosom the criminal. When Jesus Christ came to substitute his law of love in the place of the stern justice of Moses, he well knew that it would abridge the duration of the kingdoms of the earth, but he opened to men the kingdom of heaven . . . . . Without eternity and immortality, Christianity would cost to earth more than it restores. This was my waking dream throughout the night.

A train of vague ideas, phantoms of the mind, half active, half torpid, wandered slowly through my brain: the gallop of the horses that bore me along seemed more rapid than the flights of my burdened thoughts; the body appeared to have wings, the mind had become lead. I left it, as it were, behind me, as I passed over the ground more quickly than imagination could traverse space. The steppes, the marshes with their spiry pines and stunted birches, the villages, the towns, flew across my eyes like fantastic figures, before I was able to account to myself how I had been brought before this moving scene, where the soul could not keep pace with the body, so singularly was sensation quickened! . . . . . This overturning of nature, these mental deceptions of which the cause was physical, this optical illusion applied to the mechanism of ideas, this displacing of life, these voluntary dreams, were prolonged by the monotonous songs of the men who drove my horses, — lugubrious notes, like some of the chants of our churches, or rather like the nasal accents of the old Jews in the German synagogues. They say these

peasants are very musical; we shall see by and by. I have heard nothing yet that merits the trouble of being listened to. The chanted communings of the coachman with his horses, during the night, are very doleful: this murmur without rhythm, this declamatory reverie in which man confides his sorrows to the brute, the only kind of friend by whom he is not despised, filled me with a melancholy more deep than pleasing.

At one place, the road shelved suddenly upon a bridge of boats, which lay much below its level by reason of the droughts that had dried up the river thus crossed. This river, still broad, although shrunk in its bed by the summer heats, bears a celebrated name — it is the Volga. Upon the border of the famous stream appeared, gilded by the moon, a city, whose long white walls gleamed in the night, which is only a twilight favourable to the conjuring up of images. The road formed a bend round this newly whitewashed city, where I found the everlasting Roman pediments and colonnades of plaster, of which the Russians are so fond, because they think them proofs of their knowledge of the arts. The city, of which I went the round, appeared immense. It was Twer, a name that brought to my recollection the interminable civil contests which make up the history of Russia until the invasion of the Tartars. I could hear brethren insulting their brethren; the cry of war resounded; I saw the massacre; the Volga flowed with blood; from the deep solitudes of Asia, the Calmuc hurried on to drink it, and to shed more. But what have I to do with this bloodthirsty crowd? It is to have a new

journey to recount to my friends; as though the picture of a country where nature has done nothing, and where art has only produced some rough sketches or copies, could interest, after the description of Spain — of that land where a people the most original, the most lively, the most independent in character, even the most free, in practice if not in theory*, struggle secretly against the most gloomy of governments; where they dance and pray together, in the intervals of throat-cutting and church pillaging. Such is the picture that my friends must forget, in order that I may describe to them a plain of some thousand leagues wide, and a society which has nothing original that it does not endeavour to conceal. . . . The task is a hard one.

Even Moscow will not recompense me for the trouble I am taking to see it. Shall I give up the idea of Moscow? order the coachman to turn, and depart in all haste for Paris? To this had my reveries brought me when the day dawned. My calèche had remained open, and in my protracted doze I had not perceived the baneful influence of the dews of the north; my clothes were saturated; my hair in a state as if dripping with perspiration; all the leather about my carriage was steeped in noxious moisture; my eyes pained me, a veil seemed to obscure my sight; I remembered the Prince —— who became blind in twenty-four hours after a bivouac in Poland, under the same latitude, in a moist prairie.†

* Within twenty leagues of Madrid, the Castilian shepherd, during the times of absolute monarchy, had no idea but that there was a free government in Spain.

† A similar fate very nearly happened to me; the disorder

My servant has just entered to announce that my carriage is mended; I am therefore again about to take the road: and unless some new accident detain me, and destine me to make my entrance into Moscow in a cart, or on foot, my next chapter will be written in the holy city of the Russians, where they give me hopes of arriving in a few hours.

I must, however, first set about concealing my papers, for each chapter, even those that will appear the most inoffensive to the friends who receive them in the form of letters, would be sufficient to send me to Siberia. I take care to shut myself up when writing; and if my feldjäger or one of the coachmen knock at the door, I put up my papers before opening it, and appear to be reading. I am going to slip this sheet between the crown and the lining of my hat. These precautions are, I hope, superfluous, but I think it necessary to take them; they at any rate suffice to give an idea of the Russian government.

in my eyes, which commenced when I wrote this sheet, increased during my sojourn in Moscow, and long after; in short, on my return from the fair of Nijni, it degenerated into an ophthalmia, the effects of which I still feel.

CHAP. XXIV.

FIRST VIEW OF MOSCOW. — SYMBOLIC ARCHITECTURE OF GREEK CHURCHES. — CASTLE OF PETROWSKI. — ENTRANCE TO MOSCOW. — ASPECT OF THE KREMLIN. — CHURCH OF SAINT BASIL. — THE FRENCH AT MOSCOW. — ANECDOTE RELATIVE TO THE FRENCH IN RUSSIA. — BATTLE OF MOSKOWA. — THE KREMLIN A CITY. — ORIGIN OF THE WORD CZAR. — AN ENGLISH HOTEL IN RUSSIA. — THE CITY BY MOONLIGHT. — POPULATION OF MOSCOW. — THE OBJECT OF CONSCIENCE. — GARDENS UNDER THE WALLS OF THE KREMLIN. — DESCRIPTION OF THE FORTRESS. — IVAN III. — NAPOLEON AND THE KREMLIN. — MODERN GRANDILOQUENCE.

DOES the reader never remember having perceived, when approaching by land some sea-port town in the Bay of Biscay or the British Channel, the masts of a fleet rising behind downs, just elevated enough to conceal the town, the piers, the flat shore, and the sea itself beyond? Above the natural rampart nothing can be discovered but a forest of poles bearing sails of a dazzling white, yards, many-coloured flags, and floating streamers. A fleet, apparently on land — such is the apparition with which my eye has been sometimes surprised in Holland, and once in England, after having penetrated into the interior of the country between Gravesend and the mouth of the Thames. Exactly similar is the effect that has been produced upon me by the first view of Moscow: a multitude of spires gleamed alone above the dust of the road, the undulations of the soil, and the misty line that nearly always clothes the distance, under the summer sun of these parts.

The uneven, thinly-inhabited, and only half-cultivated plain, resembles downs dotted with a few stunted firs. It was out of the midst of this solitude that I saw, as it were suddenly spring up, thousands of pointed steeples, star-spangled belfries, airy turrets, strangely-shaped towers, palaces, and old convents, the bodies of which all remained entirely concealed.

This first view of the capital of the Slavonians, rising brightly in the cold solitudes of the Christian East, produces an impression that cannot easily be forgotten.

Before the eye, spreads a landscape, wild and gloomy, but grand as the ocean; and to animate the dreary void, there rises a poetical city, whose architecture is without either a designating name or a known model.

To understand the peculiarity of the picture, it is necessary to remind the reader of the orthodox plan of every Greek church. The summit of these sacred edifices is always composed of several towers, which vary in form and height, but the number of which is five at the least — a sacramental number, that is often greatly exceeded. The middle steeple is the most lofty; the four others respectfully surround this principal tower. Their form varies: the summits of some resemble pointed caps placed upon a head; the great towers of certain churches, painted and gilded externally, may be severally compared to a bishop's mitre, a tiara adorned with gems, a Chinese pavilion, a minaret, and a clergyman's hat. They often consist of a simple cupola, in the shape of a bowl, and terminating in a point. All these more or less whimsical figures are crowned with large, open-worked

copper crosses, gilt, and the complicated designs of which look like work of filagree. The number and disposition of the steeples have always a symbolical religious meaning: they signify the ranks in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. They image the patriarch, surrounded by his priests, his deacons, and sub-deacons, lifting between heaven and earth his radiant head. A fanciful variety characterises this more or less richly adorned roof-work; but the primitive intention, the theological idea, is always scrupulously respected.

Bright chains of gilded or plated metal unite the crosses of the inferior steeples to the principal tower; and this metallic net, spread over an entire city, produces an effect that it would be impossible to convey, even in a picture. The holy legion of steeples, without having any precise resemblance to the human form, represents a grotesque assemblage of personages gathered together on the summits of the churches and chapels, — a phalanx of phantoms hovering over the city.

The exteriors of the mystic domes of the Russian churches are worked in a most elaborate manner. They remind the stranger of a cuirass of Damascus steel; and the sight of so many scaly, enamelled, spangled, striped, and chequered roofs, shining in the sun with various but always brilliant colours, strikes him with the most lively astonishment. The desert, with its dull sea-green tint, is, as it were, illuminated by this magical net-work of carbuncles. The play of light, in the aerial city, produces a species of phantasmagoria, in broad day, which reminds one of the reflected brilliance of lamps in the shop of a lapidary. These changing hues impart to Moscow an aspect altogether

different from that of the other great European cities. The sky, when viewed from the middle of such a city, is a golden glory, similar to those seen in old paintings. Schnitzler states, that, in 1730, Weber counted at Moscow 1500 churches. Coxe, in 1778, fixes the number at 484. As for myself, I am content with endeavouring to describe the aspect of things. I admire without counting, — I must, therefore, refer the lovers of catalogues to books made up entirely of numerals.

I have said enough, I hope, to impart to the reader a portion of the surprise which the first view of Moscow produced in me. To add to that surprise he must recollect, what he will have often read, that this city is a country within itself, and that fields, lakes, and woods, enclosed within its limits, place a considerable distance between the different edifices that adorn it. The objects being so scattered, greatly increases the effect. The whole plain is covered with a silver gauze. Three or four hundred churches, thus spread, present to the eye an immense semi-circle, so that when approaching the city, towards sunset on a stormy evening, it would be easy to fancy you saw a rainbow of fire impending above the churches of Moscow: this is the halo of the holy city. But at about three quarters of a league from the gate, the illusion vanishes. Here, the very real and heavy brick palace of Petrowski arrests the attention. It was built by Catherine after an odd modern design: the ornaments with which it is profusely covered stand in white against the red walls. These decorations, which are formed, I think, of plaster, are in a style of extravagant Gothic. The building is as

square as a die, which by no means renders its general effect more imposing. It is here that the sovereign stops, when he means to make a solemn entrance into Moscow. A summer theatre, a ball-room, and a garden have been established, so as to form a kind of public café, which I shall return to see, as it is the rendezvous of the city loungers during the summer season.

After passing Petrowski, the enchantment gradually disperses, so that by the time of entering Moscow, we feel as if waking from a brilliant dream to a very dull and prosaic reality — a vast city without any real monuments of art, that is to say, without a single object worthy of a discriminative and thoughtful approbation. Before so heavy and awkward a copy of Europe, we ask, with wonder, what has become of the Asia whose apparition had struck us with admiration so shortly before? Moscow, viewed from without and as a whole, is a creation of sylphs, a world of chimeras; when inspected close at hand and in detail, it is a vast trading city, without regularity, dusty, ill paved, ill built, thinly peopled; in short, though it unquestionably exhibits the work of a powerful hand, it betrays also the conceptions of a head whose idea of the beautiful has failed to produce one single *chef-d'œuvre*. The Russian people are strong in arms, that is, in numbers, but in the strength of imagination they are altogether deficient.

Without genius for architecture, without taste for sculpture, they can heap together stones, and create objects enormous in dimension; but they can produce nothing harmonious, nothing great in the perfection

of its proportions. Happy privilege of art! masterpieces survive themselves, subsisting in the memory of men ages after they have been devastated by time; they share, by the inspiration which they kindle, even in their latest ruin, the immortality of the minds that created them; whereas, shapeless masses are forgotten while yet untouched by time. Art, when in its perfection, gives a soul to stone; it is a mystic power. This we learn in Greece, where each fragment of sculpture conduces to the general effect of each monument. In architecture, as in the other arts, it is from the superior execution of the smallest details, and from their skilfully interwoven connection with the general plan, that the sentiment of the beautiful springs. Nothing in Russia inspires this sentiment.

Nevertheless, amid the chaos of plaster, brick, and boards, that is called Moscow, two points never cease to attract the eye — the church of St. Basil, and the Kremlin, — the Kremlin, of which Napoleon himself was only able to disturb a few stones! This prodigious fabric, with its white irregular walls, and its battlements rising above battlements, is in itself large as a city. At the close of day, when I first entered Moscow, the grotesque piles of churches and palaces embraced within the citadel rose in light against a dimly portrayed back-ground, poor in design and cold in colouring, though we are still burning with heat, suffocating with dust, and devoured by mosquitoes. It is the long continuance of the hot season which gives the colour to southern scenery; in the north we feel the effects of the summer, but we do not see it; in vain does the

air become heated for a moment, the earth remains always discoloured.

I shall never forget the chilly shudder which came over me at the first sight of the cradle of the modern Russian empire: the Kremlin alone is worth the journey to Moscow.

At the gate of this fortress, but beyond its precincts — at least, according to my feldjäger, for I have not yet been able to visit it — rises the church of St. Basil, *Vassili Blagennoï;* it is also known under the name of the Cathedral of the Protection of the Holy Virgin. In the Greek church they are lavish of the title of cathedral; every ward, every monastery has one of its own; every city possesses several. That of Vassili is certainly the most singular, if it is not the most beautiful edifice in Russia. I have as yet only seen it at a distance. Thus viewed, it appears as an immense cluster of little turrets forming a bush, or rather giving the idea of some kind of tropical fruit all bristled over with excrescences, or a crystallisation of a thousand rays: the scales of a golden fish, the enamelled skin of a serpent, the changeful hues of the lizard, the glossy rose and azure of the pigeon's neck, would all, as regards colour, serve as comparisons: above, rise minarets of a brownish red. The effect of the whole dazzles the eye, and fascinates the imagination. Surely, the land in which such a building is called a house of prayer is not Europe; it must be India, Persia, or China! — and the men who go to worship God in this box of confectionary work, can they be Christians? Such was the exclamation that escaped me at the first view of the church of Vassili. That

building must indeed possess an extraordinary style of architecture to have drawn my attention, as it did, from the Kremlin, at the moment when the mighty castle for the first time met my eyes.

Soon, however, my ideas took another turn. Where is the Frenchman who could resist an emotion of respect and of pride (for misfortune has its pride, and it is the most legitimate kind), on entering into the only city where, in our own times, took place a public event; a scene, as imposing as the most striking occurrences of ancient history?

The means that the Asiatic city took to repel its enemy was a sublime deed of despair; and thenceforward the name of Moscow is fatally united with that of the greatest captain of modern times. The sacred bird of the Greeks consumed itself in order to escape the talons of the eagle, and, like the Phœnix, the mystic dove rises again from its ashes.

In this war of giants wherein all was glory, renown does not depend upon success. The fire under the ice, the weapons of the demons of Dante — such were the arms which God placed in the hands of the Russians to repel and to destroy us. An army must be honoured for having advanced so far, though it was only to die there. ? ?

But who can excuse the chief whose want of foresight exposed it to such a struggle? At Smolensk, Buonaparte refused the peace which they did not even deign to offer him at Moscow. He hoped for the offer, but he hoped in vain.

It was a modification of that mania for forming collections, for completing catalogues, which narrowed the views of the great politician; he sacrificed his

army to the puerile satisfaction of swelling the list of the capitals which he had occupied. Rejecting the wisest councils, he did violence also to his own judgment, in order to have the gratification of installing himself in the fortress of the Czars, and of sleeping there, as he had done in the palaces of nearly all the other potentates of Europe; and this vain triumph of the bold adventurer cost the emperor the sceptre of the world.

A passion for capitals was the cause of the annihilation of the finest army that France and the world ever saw, and two years later, of the fall of the Empire.

The following fact, furnishing one proof more of the unpardonable error committed by Napoleon when he marched upon Moscow, is unknown among us; I can answer for its authenticity.

Smolensk was viewed by the Russians as the bulwark of their land; they hoped that our army would be satisfied with occupying Poland and Lithuania, without venturing farther: but when they learnt the conquest of this city, the key of the empire, a cry of terror rose up from all quarters; both court and country were in consternation, and Russia believed herself in the power of the conqueror. It was at Petersburg that the Emperor Alexander received this disastrous news.

His minister of war partook of the general opinion; and wishing to place beyond the reach of the enemy his chief valuables, he put a considerable quantity of gold, papers, diamonds, and other jewels into a small chest, which he sent to Ladoga by one of his secretaries, the only man to whom he believed he might

safely confide such a trust. He directed him to wait at Ladoga for further instructions, announcing that he should probably send him an order to repair with the box to the port of Archangel, and afterwards, from thence to England. Several days elapsed without the further news which was most anxiously expected, being received. At last a courier brought the minister official information of the march of our army upon Moscow. Without hesitating a moment, he sent to Ladoga to order the return of his secretary and valuables, and repaired to the presence of the Emperor, whom he addressed with a triumphant air: "Sire, your majesty is much indebted to Providence; if you persist in following the plan laid down, Russia is saved: it is an expedition *à la* Charles XII.!"

"But Moscow?" responded the Emperor.

"It must be abandoned, Sire: to fight, would be to give away a chance; to retreat, after laying waste the country, will be to destroy the enemy without risking any thing. Famine will begin the work of destruction, the winter and the fire will consummate it: let us burn Moscow, and save the world!"

The Emperor Alexander modified this plan in the execution. He insisted on a last effort being made to save his capital.

The courage with which the Russians fought at Moskowa is well known. That battle, which received from their master the name of Borodino, was glorious not only to them, but to us; for, notwithstanding all their gallant efforts, they could not prevent our entrance into Moscow.

God was willing to furnish the chroniclers of the age—an age the most prosaic that the world has ever

seen—with one epic story. Moscow was voluntarily sacrificed, and the flames of that sacred conflagration became the signal for the revolution of Germany and the deliverance of Europe. The nations felt at last that they would have no rest until they had annihilated that indefatigable conqueror who sought peace by means of perpetual war.

Such were the recollections that absorbed my thoughts at the first view of the Kremlin. To have worthily recompensed Moscow, the Emperor of Russia ought to have re-established his residence in that twice holy city.

The Kremlin is not like any other palace, it is a city in itself; a city that forms the root of Moscow, and that serves as the frontier fortress between two quarters of the world. Under the successors of Gengis-Khan, Asia made her last rush upon Europe: in turning to retreat, she struck the earth with her foot, and from thence rose the Kremlin!

The princes who now possess this sacred asylum of oriental despotism, call themselves Europeans, because they have chased the Calmucs, their brethren, their tyrants, and their instructors, out of Muscovy. None resemble the khans of Saraï so much as their antagonists, the czars of Moscow, who have borrowed from them even to their very title. The Russians gave the name of *czars* to the khans of the Tartars. Karamsin says, on this subject, vol. vi. page 438.:—

"This word is not derived from the Latin *Cæsar*, as several learned men erroneously suppose. It is an ancient oriental word, as may be seen in the Slavonian translation of the Bible; and it was first given by us to the emperors of the East, and afterwards to the

Tartar khans. It signifies, in Persic, a *throne*, or *supreme* authority; and it is to be traced in the termination of the names of the Assyrian and Babylonish kings, as Phalassar, Nâbonassar, &c." He adds, in a note, "In our translation of the Holy Scriptures, Kessar is written for Cæsar; but tzar, or *czar*, is altogether a different word."

On first entering the city of Moscow, I forgot poetry, and even history; I thought only of what I saw, which was not very striking, for I found myself in streets similar to those in the outskirts of all great cities: I crossed a boulevard which resembled other boulevards, and then, after driving down a gentle descent, found myself among straight and handsome lines of houses built of stone. At last I reached the Dmitriskoï-street, where a handsome and comfortable chamber had been engaged for me in an excellent English hotel. I had, at Petersburg, been commended to Madame Howard, who without this introduction would not have received me into her house. I took care not to reproach her for being so scrupulous, for it is owing to this precaution that one can sleep comfortably in her establishment. The means by which she has succeeded in maintaining in it a cleanliness rarely seen any where, and which is an absolute miracle in Russia, is the having had erected, in her court-yard, a separate building, in which the Russian servants are obliged to sleep. These men never enter the principal edifice except to wait upon their masters. In her judicious precautions, Madame Howard goes yet further. She will scarcely admit any Russian guest: consequently, neither my feld-jäger nor coachman knew her house, and we had some

difficulty in finding it; although it is, notwithstanding its want of a sign, the best inn in Moscow and in Russia. Immediately on being installed I sat down to write. Night is now approaching, and as there is a bright moon, I lay down my pen in order to take a ramble over the city, which promenade I will describe on my return.

I commenced my perambulations at about ten o'clock, without guide or companion, and strolled at hazard from street to street, according to my usual custom. I first traversed several long and wide streets, more hilly than most of those in Russia, but laid out with equal regularity. There can be no complaint of the want of straight lines in the architecture of this country, nevertheless, the line and rule have less spoiled Moscow than Petersburg. There, the imbecile tyrants of modern cities found a level surface ready prepared for them; here, they had to struggle with the inequalities of the soil, and with the ancient national edifices. Thanks to these invincible obstacles presented by nature and history, the aspect of Moscow is still that of an ancient city. It is more picturesque than any other in the empire, which continues to recognise it as its capital, in spite of the almost supernatural efforts of the Czar Peter and his successors: so strong is the law of circumstances against the will of men — men even the most powerful. Despoiled of its religious honours, deprived of its patriarch, abandoned by its sovereign, and by the most courtly of its ancient boyards, without any other attractive association than that of a heroic event, too modern to be as yet duly appre-

ciated, Moscow has been obliged to have recourse to commerce and industry. They boast of its silk manufactories. But the history and the architecture are still here to preserve its imprescriptible rights to political supremacy. The Russian government favours the pursuits of industry: being unable altogether to stem the torrent of the age, it prefers enriching the people to enfranchising them.

This evening, towards ten o'clock, the sun sank, and the moon rose. The turrets of the convents, the spires of the chapels, the towers, the battlements, the palaces, and all the irregular and frowning masses of buildings that form the Kremlin, were here and there swathed with wreaths of light as resplendent as golden fringes, while the body of the city was seen only by the remaining beams of day, which momentarily faded on the painted tiles, the copper cupolas, the gilded chains, and the metallic roofs, that make the firmament of Moscow. These edifices, the general grouping of which gives the idea of some rich tapestry, still however stood in richly coloured relief against the faint blue ground of heaven. It seemed as if the sun had sought to give a parting salute to the ancient capital of Russia. This adieu appeared to me magnificent; although clouds of musquitos buzzed about my ears, whilst my eyes were filled with the dust of the streets, kept in continual motion by the thousands of vehicles moving about, at a gallop, in all directions.

The most numerous were the truly national drowskas, those tiny summer sledges, which being unable conveniently to carry more than one person at a time, are multiplied to infinity in order to meet the

wants of an active population, numerous, but lost in the circuit of so immense a city. The dust of Moscow is excessively troublesome, being fine as the lightest ashes. We have still a burning temperature. The Russians are astonished at the intensity and duration of the heat of this summer.

The Slavonian Empire — that rising sun of the political world towards which all the earth is turning its eyes — is it also to be blessed with the sun of heaven? The natives pretend, and often repeat, that the climate is ameliorating. Wonderful power of human civilisation, whose progress is to change even the temperature of the globe! Whatever may be the winters of Moscow and Petersburg, I know few climates more disagreeable than that of these two cities during the summer. It is the fine season which should be called the bad weather of northern lands.

The first thing that struck me in the streets of Moscow was the more lively, free, and careless bearing of the population as compared with that of Petersburg. An air of liberty is here breathed that is unknown to the rest of the empire. It is this which explains to me the secret aversion of the sovereigns to the old city, which they flatter, fear, and fly. The Emperor Nicholas, who is a good Russian, says he is very fond of it; but I cannot see that he resides in it more than did his predecessors, who detested it.

This evening a few streets were partially illuminated. It is difficult to understand the taste of the Russians for illuminations, when we recollect that during the short season, when they can alone enjoy this kind of spectacle, there is scarcely any night

in the latitude of Moscow, and still less in that of Petersburg.

On returning to my lodgings, I asked the cause of these moderate demonstrations of joy, and was informed that the illumination was in honour of the anniversaries of the births or baptisms of all the members of the imperial family. There are in Russia so many permanent fêtes of this sort, that they pass almost unnoticed. This indifference proves to me that fear can be sometimes imprudent, that it does not always know how to flatter so well as it would wish to do. Love is the only really skilful flatterer, because its praises, even when most exaggerated, are sincere. This is a truth which conscience vainly preaches in the ear of despots.

The inefficacy of conscience in human affairs, in the greatest as in the least, is, to me, the most wonderful mystery in this world, for it proves to me the existence of another. God creates nothing without an object: since, then, he has given conscience to every individual, and since this internal light is so useless upon earth, it must have its ordained mission to fulfil elsewhere: the evil deeds of this world have for their excusers our passions; the justice of the next world will have for its advocate our conscience.

I slowly followed the promenaders of the streets, and after having ascended and descended several declivities in the wake of a wave of idle loungers, whom I mechanically took for guides, I reached the centre of the city, a shapeless square, adjoining which was a garden, with alleys of trees brilliantly lighted, and under them could be heard the sound of distant music. Several open cafés tended further to

remind me of Europe; but I could not interest myself with these amusements: I was under the walls of the Kremlin, — that colossal mountain raised for tyranny by the hands of slaves. For the modern city a public promenade has been made, a species of garden planted in the English taste, round the walls of the ancient fortress of Moscow. How am I to describe the walls of the Kremlin? The word *walls* gives an idea of quite too ordinary an object; it would deceive the reader: the walls of the Kremlin are a chain of mountains. This citadel, reared on the confines of Europe and Asia, is, as compared with ordinary ramparts, what the Alps are to our hills: the Kremlin is the Mont Blanc of fortresses. If the giant that is called the Russia Empire had a heart, I should say that the Kremlin was the heart of the monster; but, as it is, I would call it the head.

I wish I could give an idea of this mighty pile of stones, reared step by step into the heavens; this asylum of despotism, raised in the name of liberty: for the Kremlin was a barrier opposed to the Calmucs by the Russians: its walls have equally aided the independence of the state and the tyranny of the sovereign. They are boldly carried over the deep sinuosities of the soil. When the declivities of the hillocks become too precipitous, the rampart is lowered by steps: these steps, rising between heaven and earth, are enormous; they are the ladder for the giants who make war against the gods.

The line of this first girdle of structures is broken by fantastic towers, so elevated, strong, and grotesque in form, as to remind one of the peaks in Switzerland, with their many-shaped rocks, and their many-

coloured glaciers. The obscurity no doubt contributed to increase the size of objects, and to give them unusual forms and tints, — I say tints, for night, like engravings, has its colouring. To behold gentlemen and ladies, dressed *à la parisienne*, promenading at the feet of this fabulous palace, was to fancy myself in a dream. What would Ivan III., the restorer, or, it might be said, the founder of the Kremlin, have thought, could he have beheld at the foot of the sacred fortress, his old Muscovites, shaved, curled, in frock coats, white pantaloons, and yellow gloves, eating ices, seated before a brightly-lighted café? He would have said, as I do, it is impossible! and yet, this is now seen every summer evening in Moscow.

I have, then, wandered in the public gardens planted on the glacis of the ancient citadel of the Czars; I have seen the towers, wall above wall, the platforms, terrace upon terrace, and my eyes have swept over an enchanted city. It would need the eloquence of youth, which every thing astonishes and surprises, to find words analogous to these prodigious things. Above a long vault, which I crossed, I perceived a raised viaduct, by which carriages and foot-passengers enter the holy city. The spectacle was bewildering; nothing but towers, gates, and terraces, raised one above the other, steep slopes, and piled arches, all serving to form the road by which the Moscow of the present day, the vulgar Moscow, is left for the Kremlin — the Moscow of miracle and of history. These aqueducts, without water, support other stories of more fantastic edifices. I observed, raised upon one of the hanging passages, a low round tower, all bristling with battlements of spear-heads. The silver

brightness of this ornament contrasted singularly with the blood-red of the walls. The tower seemed like a crowned giant standing before the fortress of which he was the guardian. What is there that one could not see, by the light of the moon, wandering at the foot of the Kremlin? There, every thing is supernatural; the mind believes in spectres in spite of itself. Who could approach without a religious terror this sacred bulwark, a stone of which, disturbed by Buonaparte, rebounded even to Saint Helena, to crush the conqueror in the bosom of the ocean! Pardon, reader, I am born in the age of grandiloquence.

The newest of the new schools is endeavouring to banish it, and to simplify language upon the principle that people the most devoid of imagination that have ever existed, ought most carefully to shun venturing among the tortuous paths of a faculty which they do not possess. I can admire a puritanical style when it is employed by superior talents, talents capable of divesting it of all monotony, but I cannot imitate it.

After having seen all that I have gazed at this evening, it would be wise to return straight to one's own country: the excitement of the journey is exhausted.

CHAP. XXV.

THE KREMLIN BY DAYLIGHT. — CHARACTER OF ITS ARCHITECTURE. — SYMBOLIC IMAGERY. — RELATION BETWEEN THE CHARACTER OF BUILDINGS AND BUILDERS. — IVAN IV. — PATIENCE CRIMINAL. — INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF IVAN IV. — REASONS FOR CREDITING KARAMSIN.

An attack of ophthalmia, which came on between Petersburg and Moscow, gives me much pain and annoyance. Notwithstanding this malady, I resumed to-day my promenade of yesterday evening, in order to compare the Kremlin by daylight with the fantastic Kremlin of the night. The shade increases and distorts every thing: the sun restores to objects their forms and their proportions.

At this second view, the fortress of the Czars still surprises me. The moonlight magnified and threw out in strong relief certain masses of the fabric, but it concealed others; and, while acknowledging that I had imaged to myself too many vaults, and galleries, hanging roads, and lofty portals, I found quite enough of all these objects to justify my enthusiasm. There is something of every thing at the Kremlin: it is a varied landscape of stones. The solidity of its ramparts exceeds that of the rocks on which they stand. The multitude and the multiformity of its parts are a marvel. This labyrinth of palaces, museums, towers, churches and dungeons, is terrific as the architecture of Martin; it is as great and more

irregular than the compositions of that English painter. Mysterious sounds rise out of the depth of its subterranes; such abodes must be haunted by spirits, they cannot belong to beings like ourselves. The citadel of Moscow is not merely a palace, a national sanctuary for the historical treasures of the empire; it is the bulwark of Russia, the revered asylum in which sleep the tutelary saints of the country; it is also the prison of spectres.

This morning, still wandering without a guide, I penetrated even to the middle of the fortress, and found my way into the interior of some of the churches which ornament that pious city, as venerated by the Russians for its relics as for the worldly riches and the warlike trophies which it encloses. I am too excited now to describe these objects in detail, but hereafter I shall pay a methodical visit to the Treasury.

The Kremlin, on its hill, gives me the idea of a city of princes, built in the midst of a city of people. This tyrannical castle, this proud heap of stones, looks down scornfully upon the abodes of common men; and, contrary to what is the case in structures of ordinary dimensions, the nearer we approach the indestructible mass the more our wonder increases. Like the bones of certain gigantic animals, the Kremlin proves to us the history of a world of which we might doubt until after seeing the remains In this prodigious creation strength takes the place of beauty, caprice of elegance: it is like the dream of a tyrant, fearful but full of power; it has something about it that disowns the age; means of defence which are adapted to a system of war that exists no longer;

an architecture that has no connection with the wants of modern civilisation: a heritage of the fabulous ages, a gaol, a palace, a sanctuary, a bulwark against the nation's foes, a bastille against the nation, a prop of tyrants, a prison of people, — such is the Kremlin. A kind of northern Acropolis, a Pantheon of barbarism, this national fabric may be called the Alcazar of the Slavonians.

Such, then, was the chosen abode of the old Muscovite princes; and yet these formidable walls were not sufficient shelter for the terror of Ivan IV.

The fear of a man possessing absolute power is the most dreadful thing upon earth; and with all the imagery of this fear visible in the Kremlin, it is still impossible to approach the fabric without a shudder.

Towers of every form, round, square, and with pointed roofs, belfries, donjons, turrets, spires, sentry-boxes upon minarets, steeples of every height, style and colour, palaces, domes, watch-towers, walls, embattlemented and pierced with loopholes, ramparts, fortifications of every species, whimsical inventions, incomprehensible devices, chiosks by the side of cathedrals — every thing announces violation and disorder, every thing betrays the continual *surveillance* necessary to the security of the singular beings who were condemned to live in this supernatural world. Yet these innumerable monuments of pride, caprice, voluptuousness, glory, and piety, notwithstanding their apparent variety, express one single idea which reigns here everywhere — war maintained by fear. The Kremlin is the work of a superhuman being, but that being is malevolent. Glory in slavery — such is the allegory figured by this satanic monument, as

extraordinary in architecture as the visions of St. John are in poetry. It is a habitation which would suit some of the personages of the Apocalypse.

In vain is each turret distinguished by its peculiar character and its particular use; all have the same signification, — terror armed.

Some resemble the caps of priests, others the mouth of a dragon, others swords, their points in the air, others the forms and even the colours of various exotic fruits; some again represent a head-dress of the czars, pointed, and adorned with jewels like that of the Doge of Venice; others are simple crowns: and all this multitude of towers of glazed tiles, of metallic cupolas, of enamelled, gilded, azured, and silvered domes, shine in the sun like the colossal stalactites of the salt-mines in the neighbourhood of Cracow. These enormous pillars, these towers and turrets of every shape, pointed, pyramidical, and circular, but always in some manner suggesting the idea of the human form, seem to reign over the city and the land. To see them from afar shining in the sky, one might fancy them an assembly of potentates, richly robed and decorated with the insignia of their dignity, a meeting of ancestral beings, a council of kings, each seated upon his tomb; spectres hovering over the pinnacles of a palace. To inhabit a place like the Kremlin is not to reside, it is to defend one's self. Oppression creates revolt, revolt obliges precautions, precautions increase dangers, and this long series of actions and reactions engenders a monster; that monster is despotism, which has built itself a house at Moscow. The giants of the antediluvian world, were they

to return to earth to visit their degenerate successors, might still find a suitable habitation in the Kremlin.

Every thing has a symbolical sense, whether purposely or not, in its architecture; but the real, the abiding, that appears after you have divested yourself of your first emotions in the contemplation of these barbaric splendours, is, after all, only a congregation of dungeons pompously surnamed palaces and cathedrals. The Russians may do their best, but they can never come out of the prison.

The very climate is an accomplice of tyranny. The cold of the country does not permit the construction of vast churches, where the faithful would be frozen at prayer: here the soul is not lifted to heaven by the glories of religious architecture; in this zone man can only build to his God gloomy donjons. The sombre cathedrals of the Kremlin, with their narrow vaults and thick walls, resemble caves; they are painted prisons, just as the palaces are gilded gaols.

As travellers say of the recesses of the Alps, so of the wonders of this architecture — they are horribly beautiful.

My eye inflames more and more. I have been obliged to call in a surgeon, who has condemned me to the application of a bandage, and an imprisonment of three days in my chamber. Fortunately, I have one eye left, so that I can still occupy myself with something.

I intend to employ these three days of leisure on a work commenced at Petersburg, but interrupted

by the busy gaieties of that city. This work is a brief review of the reign of Ivan IV., the tyrant *par excellence*, and the soul of the Kremlin: not that he built that fortress, but he was born there, he died there, and his spirit still haunts the spot.

Its plan was conceived and executed by his grandsire Ivan III. I have done my best to give an idea of the place itself, and I will now endeavour to aid the description by painting the colossal figures of the men who were its habitants. If from the arrangements of a house we can form a judgment as to the character of its inhabitants, can we not also, by an analogous operation of mind, picture to ourselves the aspect of edifices by a study of the men for whom they were constructed? Our passions, our habits, our genius, are powerful enough to engrave themselves indelibly on the very stones of our dwellings.

Assuredly, if there be any building to which may be applied such a process of the imagination, it is the Kremlin. Europe and Asia are there seen united, under the influence of the genius of the Lower Empire.

Whether the fortress be viewed under a purely historical, or a poetical and picturesque aspect, it is the most national monument in Russia, and consequently the most interesting both for Russians and for foreigners.

This sanctuary of despotism was re-constructed in stone for Ivan III., in 1485, by two Italian architects, Marco and Pietro Antonio, who were invited to Moscow by the *Great Prince* *, when he wished to

* The title then given to the grand dukes of Moscow.

again rear the ramparts, formerly wooden, of the fortress more anciently founded under Dmitri Donskoï.

But if this palace was not built by Ivan IV., it was built for him. It was by a spirit of prophecy that the great king, his grandfather, constructed the palace of the tyrant. Italian architects may be found every where, but in no other place have they produced a work similar to that which they raised at Moscow. I may add that there have been elsewhere absolute, unjust, arbitrary, and capricious sovereigns, and yet, that the reign of none of these monsters has resembled that of Ivan IV. The same seed springing under different climates and in different soils, produces plants of the same species, but of many varieties. The earth will never see two masterpieces of despotism similar to the Kremlin, nor two nations as superstitiously patient as was the Muscovite nation under the monstrous reign of its greatest tyrant.

The consequences of that reign are felt even in our days. Had the reader accompanied me in this journey, he would have discovered, as I have done, in the inner depths of the Russian character, the inevitable injuries produced by arbitrary power carried to its last excess; first, namely, a careless indifference to the sanctity of truth in speech, of candour in sentiment, and of justice in acts; and afterwards, falsehood rampant in all its forms, fraud triumphant, and the moral sense, in fact, wholly destroyed.

I could fancy I saw a procession of vices pouring forth from all the gates of the Kremlin to inundate Russia.

Other nations have supported oppression, the Russian nation has loved it: it loves it still. Is not

such fanaticism of obedience characteristic? It may not, however, be denied that this popular mania has here sometimes become the principle of sublime actions. In this inhuman land, if society has depraved the individual, it has not enervated him: he is not good, but he is also not contemptible. The same may be said of the Kremlin: it is not pleasant to behold, but it inspires awe. It is not beautiful, but it is terrible — terrible as the reign of Ivan IV.

Such a reign blinds to the latest generations the minds of a nation which submitted to it patiently: the crime of treason against humanity attaints the blood of a people even in its most distant posterity. This crime consists not only in exercising injustice, but likewise in tolerating it; a nation which, under the pretext that obedience is the chief virtue, bequeaths tyranny to its children, both mistakes its interests and neglects its duty. Blind endurance, fidelity to insane masters, are contemptible virtues; submission is only praiseworthy, sovereignty is only venerable, when they become the means of insuring the rights of mankind. When kings forget the conditions on which a man is permitted to reign over his fellow-men, the citizens have to look to God, their eternal governor, who absolves them from their oath of fidelity to their temporal master.

Such restrictions the Russians have neither admitted nor understood; yet they are essential to the development of true civilisation: without them circumstances will arise under which the social state becomes more injurious than beneficial to mankind, and when the sophists would be right in sending man back again to the woods.

Nevertheless this doctrine, with whatever moderation it be propounded, passes for seditious in Petersburg. The Russians of our times are therefore the worthy children of the subjects of Ivan IV. This is one of the reasons which induce me to present a short summary of his reign. The reader need not fear being wearied: never was there a stranger history. That madman may be said to have overstepped the limits of the sphere wherein the creature has received from God, under the name of free will, a permission to do evil; never has the arm of man stretched so far. The brutal ferocity of Ivan IV. would chill Tiberius, Nero, Caracalla, Louis XI., Peter the Cruel, Richard III., Henry VIII., and all other tyrants, ancient or modern, together with the most impartial judges, Tacitus at their head, with horror.

Before describing some of the details of his incredible excesses, I feel, therefore, the more called upon to assert my accuracy. I shall cite nothing from memory, for, in commencing this journey, I filled my carriage with the books that will aid my task; and the principal source whence I have drawn is Karamsin, an author who cannot be objected to by the Russians, for he is reproached with having softened rather than exaggerated the facts unfavourable to the renown of his nation. A prudence so extreme as to approach to partiality is the fault of this author. Every Russian writer is a courtier: Karamsin was one. Of this I find the proof in a little pamphlet, published by another courtier, Prince Wiasemski, and describing the conflagration of the winter-palace at Petersburg—a description which forms one continued eulogy

on the sovereign, who, on this occasion, deserved the praises addressed to him. The following passage occurs in the pamphlet:

"Which is the noble family in Russia that has not some glorious association to claim with these walls? Our fathers, our ancestors, all our political and warlike achievements, there received from the hands of the sovereign, and in the name of the country, the brilliant testimonies of their labours or their valour. There Lomonosloff and Derjavine struck their national lyre; there *Karamsin read the pages of his history before an august audience.* That palace was the palladium, the monument of all our glories; it was the Kremlin of our modern history."

Credence may be therefore safely given to Karamsin when he recounts the enormities of the life of Ivan.

CHAP. XXVI.

HISTORY OF IVAN IV. — COMMENCEMENT OF HIS REIGN. — EFFECTS OF HIS TYRANNY. — ONE OF ITS CAUSES. — HIS MARRIAGES. — HIS CRUELTIES. — FATE OF NOVGOROD — ABDICATION. — THE SECRET OF RUSSIAN SERVILITY. — IVAN RESUMES HIS CROWN. — THE OPRITCHNINA. — EXTRACTS FROM KARAMSIN. — COWARDICE OF IVAN. — SIBERIA CONQUERED. — FRIENDSHIP OF IVAN AND QUEEN ELIZABETH OF ENGLAND. — IVAN ASSUMES THE COWL. — RELIGIOUS RESIGNATION. — THE ONLY INDEPENDENT CHURCH. — NATIONAL AND UNIVERSAL RELIGION. — EXTRACT FROM KARAMSIN. — ANECDOTE OF GRAND DUKE CONSTANTINE. — CORRESPONDENCE OF IVAN WITH GRIASNOÏ. — LIVONIA CEDED. — MURDER OF THE CZAREWITCH. — DEATH OF IVAN. — APPENDIX: A NEW ORDER OF ARCHITECTURE. — RUSSIAN EQUITY. — SKETCH OF IVAN III., BY KARAMSIN. — RESEMBLANCE OF PETER THE GREAT TO THE IVANS. — ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF ALEXIS, SON OF THE CZAR PETER, BY M. DE SÉGUR.

If the reader has not made a particular study of the annals of Russia, he will find it difficult to believe that the sketch he is about to read is authentic history.

But all this mass of abominations, attested by history though read as fable, is not the most astonishing subject for reflection which a review of the long reign of Ivan IV. suggests. A problem altogether insolvable to the philosopher, an eternal subject for surprise and painful meditation, is the effect produced by that unparalleled tyranny on the nation that it decimated. It not only failed to alienate the people;

it served to attach them. This circumstance appears to me to throw a new light on the mysteries of the human heart.

Ivan IV. was yet a child when he ascended the throne in 1533; he was crowned, at the age of seventeen, the 16th of January, 1546; he died in his bed in the Kremlin, after a reign of fifty-one years, the 18th of January, 1584, at the age of fifty-four; and he was mourned by his whole people, not excepting the children of his victims. Whether the Muscovite mothers wept for him we may still be permitted to doubt, as the annalists are silent on that point. In a depraved state of society, women become less completely vitiated than men; the latter alone participate in the acts of government; from whence it follows that the social prejudices of each age and nation take stronger hold upon them than upon their helpmates. However this may be, it is certain that the monstrous reign of Ivan so fascinated Russia as to cause it to see in the heaven-daring power of its princes an object of admiration: political obedience has become in the hearts of the Russians a religious sentiment. It is, I believe, only among this people that the spectacle of martyrs bowing in adoration before their executioners has been ever beheld. Did Rome fall at the feet of Tiberius and Nero to supplicate them not to abdicate the absolute power, but to implore that they would continue to burn and pillage her, to wallow in her blood, and to dishonour her children? This was done in the middle of the reign of Ivan IV., at the moment when the exercise of his tyranny was most tremendous.

He wished to retire; but the Russians, gathering round their master, besought him to continue to rule them according to his humour. Thus justified, thus assured, the tyrant recommenced his career of murder. With him, to reign was to kill; and this simple constitution was confirmed by the unanimous assent of Russia, and by the tears and laments of the nation at the death of the tyrant! Ivan, when he decided, like Nero, to throw off the yoke of glory and virtue in order to reign purely by terror, did not confine himself to refinements of cruelty unknown either before or after him, he overwhelmed also with invectives the pitiable objects of his fury; he was ingenious and comic in his atrocity; the horrible and the burlesque refreshed at one and the same time his equally satirical and pitiless bosom. He pierced the inner heart with his sarcastic words, at the same time that, with his own hands, he tore in pieces the body; and, in the infernal deeds which he perpetrated upon his fellow beings, whom his restless pride took for so many enemies, the refined cruelty of words surpassed the barbarity of corporeal inflictions, even though he adopted and improved upon every species of invention by which the intensity of bodily suffering could be prolonged; for his government was the reign of torture.

Ivan IV., like the son of Agrippina, began his reign virtuously, and, which perhaps yet more commands the love of a vain ambitious nation, with conquest. The pious counsellors and prudent advisers to whom he at this period submitted, have rendered the commencement of his government one of the most brilliant and prosperous epochs in the Muscovite annals.

But the opening scene was short, and the metamorphosis sudden, complete, and terrible.

Kazan, the formidable bulwark of Islamism in Asia, after a memorable siege, fell, in 1552, under the assaults of the youthful Czar. The energy which the prince there displayed appeared amazing even in the eyes of semi-barbarians. He laid out and prosecuted his plan of campaign with a sagacity of mind and an obstinacy of courage which his oldest captains were at first incapable of duly appreciating, and, afterwards, of sufficiently admiring.

On his entrance in the career of arms, the audacity of his enterprises made all prudent courage appear pusillanimous; though we shall soon see him as cowardly, as creeping, as he was at first fearless. In becoming cruel he became dastardly: it was with him as with nearly all monsters; cruelty had imbedded its principal root in fear. He remembered all his life how he had suffered in his infancy from the despotism of the boyards. Their dissensions had endangered his existence at the period when he had no power to defend it: it might be said that manhood brought him no other desire than that of avenging the imbecility of childhood. But if there is one trait profoundly moral in the terrific history of this man, it is that he lost his courage in losing his virtue.

Is it true that God, when he made the human heart, said to it, "Thou shalt only be brave so long as thou art merciful"?

If it were so, and if too many, too celebrated examples did not disprove the existence of so desirable a rule, faith might become too easy; we should see God face to face in the destinies of his better crea-

tures, as we do see his power revealed in the life of an Ivan IV.; for, God be praised, that prince showed himself brave as a lion so long as he was generous, and dastardly as a slave when he became inhuman. This lesson, though it may be an exception in the annals of our race, is precious and consoling. I rejoice to extract it out of the depths of the horrible history of the fourth Ivan.

Owing to the energy of the young hero, whose plans were then blamed by his entire council, Astrachan underwent the fate of Kazan. Russia, delivered from the near vicinity of her ancient masters the Tartars, resounded with the shout of triumph; but the inferior classes of her population, who knew not how to escape from one yoke without passing under another, began to idolise their youthful sovereign with the timid pride of the freedman.

The wearied Czar paused to repose in the midst of his glory: he tired of the benedictions poured upon his virtues; he bent beneath the weight of palms and laurels, and renounced for ever the pursuit of his holy career. But the folly was in his heart; it did not extend to his head. In the midst of the most irrational actions his language was full of sense, his letters of logic: their cutting style paints the malignity of his soul, but it does honour to the penetration and clearness of his understanding.

His ancient counsellors were the first to suffer. They appeared to him as traitors, or, which was the same thing in his eyes, as tutors: he therefore condemned them to exile and death; and this sentence seemed equitable in the eyes of the nation. It was to the advice of these uncorruptible men that he

owed much of his glory; he could not endure the weight of gratitude which was due to them, and; for fear of continuing ungrateful, he slew them. After this, a savage fury took possession of his mind; the ever-present memory of the dissensions and violence of the nobles who disputed among themselves the custody of his cradle, revealed to him everywhere traitors and conspirators.

Idolatry of self, applied in all its forms to the government of the state, was the only code of justice adopted by the Czar, and ratified by the assent of Russia. Notwithstanding his crimes, Ivan was the elect of the nation. Elsewhere he would have been regarded as a monster vomited forth by hell.

Tired of lying, he pushed the brutality of tyranny to the point of dispensing with dissimulation — that precaution of common tyrants. He exhibited himself as simply ferocious; and, that he might have no longer occasion to blush at the virtues of others, he abandoned the last of his former austere friends to the vengeance of more indulgent favourites.

There was then established between the Czar and his satellites an emulation in crime that makes one shudder: and (here God again reveals himself in this almost supernatural history) in the same manner that his moral life is divided into two periods, so also his person presents two different aspects; his countenance underwent a change; he was handsome in his early youth; he grew hideous when he became criminal.

He lost an accomplished wife, and took another as sanguinary as himself; she also dying, he married again, to the great scandal of the Greek church, which does not allow of three nuptials. He married

in this manner, five, six, or seven times! The exact number of these unions is unknown. He repudiated, killed, or neglected all his wives; not one long resisted either his caresses or his fury: but, notwithstanding his avowed indifference to the objects of his past passion, he set about avenging their loss with a scrupulous rage, which, on each death of an empress, spread terror throughout the realm. Nevertheless, most frequently, the death which formed the pretext for so many executions had been caused or commanded by the Czar himself. His mournings were merely opportunities for shedding the blood and the tears of others. It was always said that the pious Czarina, the beautiful Czarina, the unfortunate Czarina, had been poisoned by the ministers or counsellors of the Czar, or by the boyards, of whom he wished to rid himself. It seems to have been in vain that he himself strove to throw off his mask: he continued to lie by habit, if not by necessity; such is the inseparable union of falsehood and tyranny.

The calumnies of Ivan IV. were always intimations of death. Whoever was touched by the venom of his words, fell: corpses were heaped up around him, yet death was the least of the evils with which he loaded the condemned. His profoundly skilful cruelty found out the art of making his victims long for the last stroke. Expert in giving torture, he amused himself with their agony; he protracted it with diabolical address, and in his cruel solicitude, he gently nursed their torments, and dreaded their death as much as they longed for it. Death was, in fact, the only good that he accorded his subjects.

It will be necessary, however, to enumerate, once

for all, a few of the refinements of cruelty invented by himself, and exercised upon the pretended criminals whom he would punish. He caused parts of their body to be boiled while the other parts were being bathed in ice-water. He had them flayed alive *in his presence*, and their quivering naked flesh lacerated with knives, all the while feasting his eyes with their blood and convulsions, and his ears with their screams. Sometimes he finished their torments by stabbing them with his own hand, but more often, reproaching himself with this act of clemency as a weakness, he contrived to leave uninjured the vitals as long as possible; he operated on the members, but carefully, and without attacking the trunk, casting the living morsels one by one to starved wild beasts, who devoured them in the presence of the mutilated victims. The palpitating trunks were sustained with the utmost care and science, in order to prolong to the utmost these scenes, in which the Czar and the tigers vied with each other in ferocity.

The Great Novgorod may be selected as an example of the wholesale wrath of the monster. The entire city was accused of treason in favour of the Poles; its real crime was, having long been independent and glorious. The air was tainted by the multitude of executions that took place within its blood-stained walls; the waters of the Volkoff were corrupted by the bodies which lay unburied round the ramparts of the condemned city; and, as if deaths by execution were not prompt enough for the will of the tyrant, a pestilential epidemic was created in order to aid the scaffold in destroying the population more speedily, and in glutting the rage of the *father*—a title of affec-

tion which the Russians give to all their sovereigns indiscriminately.

Under this Czar, death became the slave of a man; it lost its terrors in proportion as life lost its pleasures. The pleasure of the prince was the despair of the people; his power was extermination, his life an inglorious war against beings deprived of defence, or even of will, and whom God had placed under his protection; his law was a hatred of the human race, and his moving passion, fear.

When he revenged himself, he carried his *justice* to the last degree of relationship, exterminating entire families — young girls, old men, women with child, and unweaned infants. Nor did he confine himself to destroying merely a few families; he annihilated whole provinces, sparing nothing that had life, not even the animals; he poisoned the very fishes in the lakes and rivers; and — can it be believed? — he commanded the sons to become the executioners of the fathers!—and was obeyed!! Men, then, are capable of carrying the love of life to the point of killing those who gave it, rather than lose it themselves!

Using human bodies as clocks, Ivan invented poisons which operated at fixed intervals, so that he had the satisfaction of counting his hours and dividing his time by the deaths of his subjects — the most scrupulous precision presiding over this infernal amusement. He assisted himself at all the executions he commanded: the steam of blood intoxicated without satiating him; he was never so happy as after having presided at the torments of numerous victims. The monster, after having given so many

proofs of ferocity, must assuredly have been known by his people. Suddenly, either to amuse himself by testing the long-suffering of the Russians, or under the influence of Christian remorse (for he affected a respect for holy things: and hypocrisy itself may at times feel a sentiment of devotion, since grace, that manna of the soul, will at intervals fall upon the blackest hearts, until death shall have consummated their reprobation): whether, then, under the influence of Christian penitence, fear, caprice, lassitude, or artifice, he one day laid down his sceptre, or rather his axe, and cast his crown upon the earth. Then, and then only, during the whole course of his long reign, did the empire rise; the nation, menaced with deliverance, started from its sleep; the Russians, until then dumb witnesses, passive instruments of so many horrors, recovered their voice; and that voice of a people, which pretends to be the voice of God, was suddenly lifted up to deplore the loss of such a tyrant! Perhaps they doubted his good faith, and feared his vengeance in case of their accepting his feigned abdication; it may be their love for the prince had its source in the terror inspired by the tyrant. The Russians have refined upon fear by giving it love for a mask.

Moscow was menaced by invasion (the penitent had well chosen his time); anarchy was feared; in other words, the Russians foresaw they should be no longer able to protect themselves from liberty,—they would be exposed to think and to will by and for themselves—to show themselves men, and what was worse, citizens. The prospect that would have given happiness to any other people, drove these to despair.

In short, enervated, bewildered, and dismayed, Russia threw herself at the feet of Ivan, whom she dreaded less than she distrusted herself, and entreated this indispensable master to pick up his crown and bloody sceptre, asking, as the only favour, that he would again put on her neck the iron yoke which she will never be tired of bearing.

If this was humility, it went too far, even for Christianity; if it was cowardice, it was unpardonable; if it was patriotism, it was impious. Religion humbles, slavery debases; there is the difference between them that there is between sanctity and brutality. The Russians make a virtue of sacrificing every thing to the weal of the empire. Detestable empire, whose existence may not be perpetuated without the sacrifice of human dignity! Blinded by their monarchical idolatry, on their knees before the political idols of their own hands, the Russians, including those of our own century as well as those of Ivan's, forget that a respect for justice, a cultivation of truth, is more important to mankind, not excepting the Slavonians, than the fate of Russia. In this act I imagine that I again see the intervention of a supernatural power. I ask myself, what can be the future reserved by Providence for a community which pays such a price for the prolongation of its existence? I have too often occasion to remark that a new Roman empire is brooding in Russia under the ashes of the old Greek stock. Fear alone does not inspire so much patience. A passion actuates the Russians in a manner that no people have experienced since the time of the Romans — that passion is ambition; an ambition powerful enough to induce

them to sacrifice all—absolutely all—to its cravings. It was this sovereign law which attached a nation to an Ivan IV.: — a tiger for our God rather than the annihilation of our Empire. Such was the Russian policy under the reign which made Russia, and during which the forbearance of the victims horrifies me much more than the frenzy of the tyrant. It horrifies me because I see it perpetuated, however modified by circumstances; and because, even at this day, it would produce similar effects under a similar reign, if the earth were destined to give birth twice to an Ivan IV. Let us wonder, then, at this unique picture in history: the Russians, with the courage and the baseness of the men who desire to possess the earth, weeping at the feet of Ivan to move him to continue their governor,—him who would have made all government hateful to any people not intoxicated with the fanatical presentiment of their coming glory!

All swore—the great, the little, the boyards, the tradespeople, the castes, and the individuals; in a word, all the nation swore with tears, to submit to every thing, provided they might not be abandoned to themselves. This height of misfortune was the only reverse which the Russians, in their ignoble patriotism, could not muster courage to encounter, seeing that the inevitable disorder that would have been the result might have destroyed their empire of slaves. Ignominy carried to this point approaches the sublime: it is of the nature of virtue; it perpetuates the state;—but such a state!—the means dishonour the end.

The wild beast, touched with compassion, took pity on the herd on which he had so long preyed;

he promised to continue to decimate them; he re-assumed his power without any concessions,—on the contrary, with absurd conditions, all in advantage of his pride and fury, although they were to be accepted as favours by this people, as enthusiastic in slavery as others are fanatical in liberty, — this people, imbrued in its own blood, and which wished to be killed in order to amuse its master, who grew uneasy and trembled whenever he ceased to murder.

From this period may be dated the organisation of a tyranny so methodical and yet so violent, that the annals of the human race present nothing that can be compared to it; seeing that there was as much insanity in submitting to it as in exercising it. Prince and nation at this moment were smitten with frenzy, and the effects of the fit continue yet to operate.

The mighty Kremlin, with all its associations, its iron gates, its mysterious subterranean passages, its inaccessible ramparts soaring into heaven, appeared too weak a refuge to the insensate monarch, who sought to destroy the half of his people that he might govern the other half in security. In his horrid heart an inexplicable terror — for it had no apparent motive — united itself to an atrocity without object; the most disgraceful fear pleaded for the most blind ferocity. A new Nebuchadnezzar — the king changed into a cowardly tiger.

He first retired into a strong palace near the Kremlin, and afterwards into a *solitude* — the Slobode Alexandrowsky. This place became his habitual residence. It was there that, from among the most debauched and utterly abandoned of his slaves, he

chose a guard, consisting of a thousand men, whom he called the elect—*Opritchnina.* To this infernal legion he gave up, during seven consecutive years, the fortune and life of the Russian people; I might add their honour, if such a word had any signification among men whom it was necessary to gag, in order to govern them as they wished to be governed.

Karamsin thus describes Ivan IV. in the year 1565, nineteen years after his coronation:—

"This prince was tall and well-made; he had broad shoulders and breast, muscular arms, beautiful hair, long mustachios, an aquiline nose, small grey eyes, but formerly bright and piercing, and in all respects a countenance that had once been pleasing; but at this period it was so changed as to be scarcely recognised. A sombre ferocity was depicted on his deformed features. His eye was dull, his head nearly bald, and only a few hairs remained on his chin—inexplicable effect of the fury that devoured his soul! After a fresh enumeration of the faults committed by the boyards, he repeated his consent to keep the crown, dwelt at great length on the obligation imposed upon princes of preserving tranquillity in their territories, and of taking, with this object, all the measures they may judge necessary; expatiated *on the nothingness of human life;* the necessity of man carrying his thoughts beyond the tomb; and finally he proposed the establishment of the Opritchnina, a name until then unknown.

* * * * * * *

"The Czar announced that he should choose a thousand satellites among the princes, the gentlemen,

and the boyard children*, and that he should give them in his territories, fiefs, the actual proprietors of which would be transferred to other places.

"He took possession, in Moscow itself, of several streets, whence he drove the gentlemen and official persons whose names were not written among the thousand of the Czar. * * * * *

"As though he had conceived a hatred for the august associations of the Kremlin and for the tombs of his ancestors, he refused to inhabit the magnificent abode of Ivan III.; beyond the walls of the citadel, he built another palace, fortified with strong ramparts. This new abode was peopled with the thousand of the Czar, who formed a court, peculiar to Ivan IV., that received the name of *Opritchnina.*"

Further on, we come to the re-commencement of the murders of the boyards.

"On the fourth of February, Moscow witnessed the fulfilment of the conditions announced by the Czar in the town of Alexandrowsky. They began with the executions of the pretended traitors accused of having conspired, with Kourbsky, against the life of the monarch, of the Czarina Anastasia and their children. The first victim was the celebrated Vaivode, Prince Alexander Gorbati-Schouïsky, descendant of Saint Vladimir, of Vsevolod the Great, and the ancient princes of Souzdal. This man, who possessed a superior genius, military skill, and an equal love of religion and his country, and who had powerfully aided in

* *Les enfants boyards*, a corps of 500,000 men, tenants of the crown, instituted as an order of inferior noblesse by Ivan III., grandfather of Ivan IV.

the reduction of the kingdom of Kazan, was condemned to death, together with his son Peter, a young man of seventeen.* They arrived at the place of execution with fearless, calm, dignified countenances, and holding each other by the hand. That he might not witness the death of the author of his life, the youthful noble first offered his neck to the sword, but his father withheld him, ejaculating with emotion, 'Nay, my son, I will not see thee die!' The young man yielded, and immediately the head of the prince was severed from the body: his son took it in his hands, covered it with kisses, and, lifting his eyes to heaven, submitted himself, with serene composure, to the stroke of the headsman. Numerous other nobles suffered at the same time. The Prince Sheviref was impaled. It is said the victim lingered for a whole day under his horrible tortures, but that, supported by religion, he forgot them in singing the praises of Jesus. * * A vast number of other gentlemen had their estates confiscated and suffered exile."

In the same volume Karamsin describes the manner in which the Czar formed his new guard, which was not long restricted to the number of a thousand, nor selected only from among the higher classes.

"They sought for young men whose only qualification was an audacity and corruption, as proved by their debaucheries, which rendered them ready to undertake any thing. Ivan questioned them regarding their birth, their friends, and their patrons. It was

* The execution of these parties was unattended with torture, a mercy envied by multitudes in this reign. — *Note of the Author of the Travels.*

especially required that they should have no kind of connection with the great boyards; obscurity, and even meanness of extraction, was a recommendation. The Czar increased their number to 6000 men, who took oath to serve him in all things, and against all persons; to denounce traitors; to have no connection with the citizens of the commonalty, that is, with none who were not enrolled in the legion of the elect; and to recognise neither relationship nor family when serving the sovereign. . In return, the Czar bestowed upon them, not only the lands, but also the houses and goods, of twelve thousand proprietors, who were driven from their possessions, destitute: so that many of them, among whom were men distinguished for their services, and covered with honourable wounds, were obliged to depart on foot, and during the winter, with their wives and children, for other far distant and desert abodes," &c. &c.

It is also in Karamsin that we may read the results of this infernal institution. But the present sketch is too confined for the filling up of the picture with the details furnished by history.

The horde of banditti once let loose upon the land, and nothing but murder and rapine were to be seen. Merchants and burghers, boyards and peasants — all, in short, who were not of the *elect*, belonged to the *elect*. That terrible guard was like a single man, of whom the emperor was the soul. Merit, birth, fortune, beauty, every kind of advantage, brought evil on its possessor. The young females who had personal charms, and were so unfortunate as to be considered virtuous, were carried away to serve as toys for the Czar and his brutal favourites. That prince

retained them in his den until tired of them, when they were either despatched by tortures invented expressly for them, or sent back to die of shame among their husbands and families. Nor was this all. The instigator of such abominations obliged his own sons to take part in the orgies of his crimes, by which refinement of tyranny he robbed his besotted subjects of even the future.

To hope for a better reign would have been to conspire against the sovereign; besides — to sound in its profoundest depths this abyss of corruption — Ivan, in inciting to debauchery, was inflicting another kind of death. In destroying souls he found relief from the fatigue of destroying bodies, while he yet continued to destroy. Such was the tyrant in his hours of relaxation.

In the conduct of public affairs, the life of the monster was an inexplicable mixture of energy and cowardice. He menaced his enemies so long as he felt the strongest; but, when vanquished, he wept, prayed, cringed, and degraded himself and his people. But even this, even public shame, that last chastisement of nations who fail in their duty to themselves, did not open the eyes of the Russians.

The Khan of the Crimea burnt Moscow; the Czar fled: he returned when his capital was a heap of ashes; his presence produced more terror among the remaining inhabitants than had been caused by the enemy. Yet not a murmur reminded the monarch that he was a man, and that he had erred in abandoning his post as a monarch. The Poles and Swedes witnessed by turns the excess of his arrogance and his cowardice. In his negotiations with the Khan of the Crimea he so lowered himself as to

offer to the Tartars, Kazan and Astrachan, which he had formerly taken from them so gloriously. At a later period he yielded to Stephen Batori, Livonia, that price of blood, the object of his people's efforts during many ages. But notwithstanding these treasons of her head, Russia, indefatigable in servility, did not for one moment falter in her disgraceful obedience.

Under this reign Siberia may be said to have been first discovered and conquered by heroic Muscovite adventurers. It was the fortune of Ivan IV. to bequeath to his successors that instrument of tyranny.

Ivan felt for Elizabeth of England a sympathy which had the nature of an instinct. These two wild beasts understood each other, even at a distance; the affinities of their dispositions operated, notwithstanding that difference in their situations which explains the difference in their acts. Ivan IV. was a tiger at liberty, Elizabeth was a tigress in confinement.

Ever a prey to imaginary terrors, the Muscovite tyrant wrote to the cruel daughter of Henry VIII., the triumphant rival of Mary Stuart, to beg of her an asylum in her realm in case of a reverse of fortune. She replied to him in a long affectionate letter. Karamsin only cites parts of this letter in the original language. It is preserved, he says, in the archives of Russia. I translate literally the English passages which he gives us.

"To the most high and mighty Prince, our beloved brother the Emperor and Grand Duke Ivan Vassili, Sovereign of all the Russias.

"If at any time it should come to pass that you should, by any casual event, by any secret conspi-

racy, or by any foreign hostility, be obliged to leave your country, and should, in such case, desire to come into our realm, together with the noble empress your consort, and your beloved children, we shall, with all honour and courtesy, receive and act towards your Highness and your suite in such wise as is due to so great a prince; leaving you free to pass a quiet and peaceable life, with all those whom you may bring with you. And you shall be at liberty to practise your Christian religion in that manner which you prefer; for we have no mind to offend your Majesty nor any of your subjects, neither in any way to meddle ourselves in the matter of the conscience and religion of your Highness.

"And we will assign a place in our kingdom whereat you may reside, *at your own charge*, so long as it shall please you to remain with us. We promise this by our letter, and by the word of a Christian sovereign. In pledge whereof, we Elizabeth, the Queen, subscribe this letter with our own hand in presence of our nobles and council:

> "Nicholas Bacon, Knight (father of the celebrated philosopher), Grand Chancellor of our Realm of England; William Lord Parr, Marquis of Northampton, Knight of the Garter; Henry Earl of Arundel, Knight of the said Order; Robert Dudley Lord Denbigh, Earl of Leicester, Master of the Horse, and Knight of the Garter."

Several other names follow, of which the last is Cecil, Secretary of State.

In conclusion, the Queen adds these lines:

"Promising ourselves that we shall unite our forces to combat together our common enemies, and that we shall observe all that is contained in this letter, so long as God shall grant us life; and this is confirmed by our word and royal faith.

"Given at our palace of Hampton Court, this 18th day of May, in the twelfth year of our reign, and in the year of our Lord 1570."

This friendship lasted during the life of the Czar, who was even at one time on the point of contracting an eighth marriage with Mary Hastings, a relative of the Queen of England: but the reputation of Ivan IV. had not, for the imagination of the betrothed, the same fascination that it had for the masculine spirit of Elizabeth. Happily there are not many hearts that can be seduced by the attractions of barbarity.

The negotiations connected with this project of marriage had been opened by Robert Jacobi, one of the physicians of the English court, whom Elizabeth sent to *her* "*beloved brother*," together with surgeons and apothecaries, a little before his death. These relations suffice to exhibit the character of the feeling which the instinct of despotism and commercial interests, thenceforward the first for England, had established between the two tyrants. I must now finish the sketch of the tyranny of Ivan.

One day he took it into his head to assume the habit of a monk, and clothed his companions in debauchery with the same dress. Disguised in this manner, he continued to horrify heaven and earth by his inhumanity and monstrous libertinism. He

tempted his people by driving them to despair, but it was in vain. To the insatiable cruelty of their master, the slaves continued to oppose an invincible resignation. Nothing could quench their thirst for servitude. Obedience carried to such excess was not an exercise of patience, it was a passion; and this explains the enigma.

Among nations yet young there exists so practical a faith in the universal presence of God, so strong a sense of his intervention in the smallest events of this world, that the march of human affairs is never viewed as caused or directed by man; every thing that happens is the result of a decree of Heaven. Life seems nothing to those who aspire to the bliss of the elect. The hand that takes it does good rather than evil. Little is lost, much is gained. What is the possession of the whole earth compared with the sure reward of virtue, that only good of which tyranny cannot deprive man? The executioner only increases a hundred fold the treasures of the victims, by the means of sanctification which he offers to their pious resignation.

Thus reason people smitten with the passion of unconditional submission: but never has this dangerous religion produced so many fanatics as have been, and still are to be seen in Russia.

It is fearful to think of the uses which religious truth can be made to subserve here below. Had a man permission to kneel before God to ask for one, one only favour, it should be that he would be pleased to grant that the interpreters of his supreme wisdom might be always free men. A slavish priest is inevitably a liar, an apostate, and may also become an executioner. Every national church is schismatic,

and dependent. Every true priest is a citizen of the world and a pilgrim of heaven. Without placing himself beyond the laws of his country as a man, he has alone for the judge of his faith as an apostle, the bishop of bishops — the only independent pontiff that can be found upon earth. It is the independence of the visible head of the church that assures to all the Catholic priests their sacerdotal dignity: it is it also which promises to the Pope the perpetuity of power. All the other priests will return to the mother church when they recognise the sanctity of their missions, and they will then weep, with burning shame, for their apostacy. The temporal power will then no longer find preachers to justify its encroachments on the spiritual. Schism and heresy, those national religions, will give place to the Catholic Church — the religion of the human race: for, in the beautifully expressive words of M. de Chateaubriand, "Protestantism is the religion of princes."

Nevertheless, it must be recorded that, despite the proverbial timidity of the Russian clergy, it was the religious power that, during the incomprehensible reign of Ivan IV., made the longest resistance. At an after-period, Peter I. and Catherine II. avenged their predecessor. The sacrifice is consummated; the Russian priest, impoverished, humiliated, degraded, married, deprived of his supreme spiritual head, divested of all spiritual influence, a mere thing of flesh and blood, follows the triumphal car of his enemy, whom he still calls his master. He has become, through the perseverance of Peter and of Catherine, the humblest slave of the autocracy; and the spirit of Ivan is appeased. From one end of the empire to the other,

the voice of God can no longer rise above the voice of the emperor.

Such is the inevitable final fate of national churches. The circumstances may vary, the moral abjectedness will be the same everywhere: whenever the priest abdicates, the state usurps. To make a sect, is to enslave the minister of Christ. In every church separated from the trunk, the conscience of the priest is an illusory power; thenceforward the purity of faith becomes adulterated, and charity, that fire of heaven with which the hearts of the saints burn, degenerates into mere humanity. Grace gives place to reason, which, in matters of faith, is only the hypocritical auxiliary of physical power. Hence the profound hatred of all ministers, of all sectarian teachers, towards the Catholic priest. All recognise him as their only enemy, for he alone is priest, he alone teaches; the others do but plead.

To complete the portrait of Ivan we must again have recourse to Karamsin. I shall finish my sketch by some of the most characteristic passages in his history.

After recounting that quarrels respecting preeminence still took place at court (etiquette in the den of a wild beast!), he observes: "But if the Czar shut his eyes to disputes about precedency that took place among the Vaivodes, he never pardoned faults in their military conduct: for example, Prince Michael Nozdrovoty, an officer of high rank, *was whipped in the stables*, for having ill-managed the siege of Milten."

Such was a Czar's appreciation of the dignity of the nobles and the army.

This fact, which occurred in 1577, reminds me of another, which belongs to the history of Russia in our days. There is less difference than some may think between the past and the present in this land. The event happened at Warsaw, under the Grand Duke Constantine, and in the reign of the Emperor Alexander, the most philanthropical of the Czars.

One day, Constantine was reviewing his guard, and desirous of proving to a foreigner the point to which discipline was carried in the Russian army, he descended from horseback, approached one of his *generals*, and, without addressing him a word, quietly ran his sword into his foot. The general remained immoveable, and did not breathe a complaint. He was carried away after the Grand Duke had drawn back his sword. Such stoicism of the slave justifies the definition of the Abbé Galiani: "Courage," he said, "is nothing more than a very extreme fear!"

The spectators remained silent witnesses of this scene, which took place in the public square of Warsaw, in the nineteenth century!

The Russians, then, of our epoch, are worthy descendants of the subjects of Ivan. Let it not be said, in excuse, that Constantine was mad. That madness, if real, must have been known; for from his early youth his conduct had been marked by similar public acts of insanity. After so many proofs, then, of mental alienation, to give him the command of armies and the government of kingdoms, was to proclaim, in a manner the most revolting, contempt for the human race. But I do not believe in this insanity of Constantine; I see in his life the mad excesses only of cruelty,

It has often been repeated that madness is hereditary in the Imperial Russian family. This is flattering them. I believe that the madness lies in the nature of the government, and not in the faulty organization of the individuals. Real absolute power must, in the long run, disturb the reason even of the most healthy faculties; despotism blinds both people and sovereign. This truth appears proved, even to demonstration, by the history of Russia. To continue our extracts from Karamsin: we are next to see an ambassador avowing his concurrence in the disgraceful idolatry of tyranny.

"Prince Sougorsky, sent as envoy to the Emperor Maximilian, in 1576, fell ill in travelling through Courland. Out of respect to the Czar, the duke sent a minister several times to inquire after his health. The sick man unceasingly repeated, '*My health is nothing, if only that of my sovereign prospers.*' At length the astonished minister asked him, 'How can you serve such a tyrant with so great a zeal?' 'We Russians,' responded Prince Sougorsky, 'are always devoted to our Czars, be they good or cruel.' In proof of his assertion the sick ambassador related that, a short time before, Ivan had caused one of his nobles to be impaled for '*a slight fault,* and that the unhappy wretch lingered twenty-four hours in excruciating torments, conversing with his wife and children, and repeating incessantly, 'Great God, protect the Czar!'"*

* This devotion of the victim to the tyrant is a species of fanaticism that seems peculiar to the people of Asia and of Russia. — *Note of Author of Travels.*

Karamsin himself adds, "The Russians gloried in the very thing for which they were reproached by foreigners — a blind and unbounded devotion to the will of the monarch, even when, in his most insensate vagaries, he trampled all the laws of justice and humanity under his feet."

I am sorry I must not venture to multiply these curious quotations. I will, however, give one more illustration, in the correspondence of the Czar with one of his creatures.

"The Khan of the Crimea had taken prisoner a favourite of Ivan, Vassili Griaznoï, whom he offered to exchange for Mouzza Divy, a proposal which the Czar would not accept, although he lamented the fate of Griaznoï, and wrote him *friendly* letters, in which, as was his wont, he ridiculed the services of his unlucky favourite. 'You fancied,' he said, 'that it was as easy to make war with the Tartars as to make jokes at my table. They are very different people from you Russians. They do not go to sleep in the enemy's country; they do not constantly repeat to themselves, *It is time to return home!* What a droll idea came into your head when you thought you could make yourself pass for a great man! It is true that, obliged to keep at a distance the perfidious boyards who surround us, we call near to our person slaves of low extraction like yourself, yet you must not forget your father and your grandfather. Do you dare to put yourself on a par with Divy? Liberty would restore you to a voluptuous life, at the same time that it would put a sword into his hand against the Christians. It must suffice that, willing to protect such of our

slaves as serve us with zeal, we are ready to pay a ransom for you.'"

The answer of the slave is worthy of the letter of the master. It not only depicts a vile heart, but also gives an idea of the *espionnage* exercised by the Russians in foreign lands. It is as follows: —

"My lord, I have not slept in this land of the enemy. *I have executed your orders; I have gathered information valuable to the safety of the empire;* trusting in nobody, and watching night and day. I was taken, covered with wounds, and abandoned by my cowardly companions in arms. I slew in battle the enemies of the Christian name; and, during my captivity, *I have killed the Russian traitors* who sought your ruin. They have been secretly destroyed by my hand, and not a single one remains in this place now alive.* I jested at the table of my sovereign only to amuse him; now, I die for GOD and for HIM. It is by special mercy of the Most High that I yet breathe; the ardour of my zeal for your service supports me in the hope that I shall return to Russia, in order again to minister to *the amusements of my prince.* My body is in the Crimea, but my soul is with *God* and *your Majesty.* I do not fear death, I fear only your displeasure."

Such is the amicable correspondence of the Czar and his creature.

But all the events of this monstrous reign, monstrous especially in its length and its security, are effaced by the crowning crime.

* At the court of the Emperor Nicholas a great nobleman may be seen daily, who is called, privately, *the Poisoner.*

We have already said that, crouching and trembling at the very name of Poland, Ivan yielded to Batori, almost without striking a blow, the province of Livonia, a province furiously contested for ages with the Swedes, the Poles, and its own inhabitants. Livonia was, to Russia, the gate of Europe, the means of communication with the civilised world. It had been from time immemorial the object of the covetousness of the Czars, and of the efforts of the Muscovites. In an unaccountable fit of terror, the most arrogant, and, at the same time, the most cowardly of princes, abandoned this prey to the enemy; not in consequence of any disastrous battle, but spontaneously, with a stroke of his pen, and when in the possession of an innumerable army and an inexhaustible treasure.

The Czarewitch, the beloved son of Ivan IV., on whom he lavished all his tenderness, whom he brought up in his own image, in the exercise of his own crimes and most scandalous debaucheries, felt some shame in contemplating the unmanly conduct of his father and sovereign. He ventured no remonstrance, for he knew Ivan too well; but, carefully avoiding every word that might sound like a reproach, he confined himself to asking permission to go and fight the Poles. "Ah! you find fault with my political acts! this is treason!" responded the Czar; "Who knows if you have not already conceived the design of raising the standard of revolt against me!"

Whereupon, inflamed with sudden rage, he seized a baton bound with iron, and violently struck the head of his son with it: a favourite endeavoured to

stay the hand of the tyrant; Ivan redoubled his blow, and the Czarewitch fell mortally wounded.

Here commences the only affecting scene in the life of Ivan.

The prince lay in agonies for more than one day. As soon as the Czar saw that he had destroyed with his own hand the object that was most dear to him in the world, he fell into a despair as wild and violent as his anger had been terrible: he rolled in the dust, uttering the most horrid howls; he mixed his tears with the blood of his unhappy son, kissing his wounds, invoking heaven and earth to spare to him the life which he had himself destroyed, calling surgeons and sorcerers, and promising treasures and titles to whoever would restore the heir of his throne, the only object of his tenderness—the tenderness of Ivan IV.!!

All was in vain! Inevitable death drew on. God had judged the father and the son: the son was ordained to die. But his torments were long; Ivan learnt for once to feel for the pain of another. For four days the victim struggled with his agony.

But how think you these four days were employed? how would you expect this son, first perverted by his father, and afterwards unjustly suspected, insulted, and killed by him, to avenge himself? He passed his time of trial in praying to God for that father, in consoling him, in excusing him, in repeating to him, with a delicacy of feeling worthy the son of the best of men, that his punishment, severe as it might be, was not unjust: for a son who blames, even in the secret of his heart, a crowned father, deserves to perish.

When the last struggle approached, the unhappy son thought only of hiding the agonies of his death from the eyes of his assassin, whom he venerated as much as if he had been the best of parents and the greatest of kings: he entreated the Czar to retire.

When, instead of yielding to the request of the dying man, Ivan, in the delirium of remorse, first threw himself upon the bed, and then fell on his knees before his victim to ask his pardon, this hero of filial piety regained, under the inspiration of a sentiment of duty, a supernatural energy; already in the clutch of death, he struggled with the power that was dragging him away, and gathered a miraculous strength to repeat, with deep solemnity, that he was guilty, that his death was just, and that it was too gentle. He succeeded in disguising his anguish by force of soul, filial love, and respect for the sovereign; he concealed from his father the agonies of a body in which the vigour of youth struggled terribly against destruction. The gladiator fell with grace; supported, not by a base pride, but by an effort of charity, of which the sole aim was to mitigate the remorse of a guilty parent. He protested to his last gasp, that he was faithful to the legitimate sovereign of Russia; and he died at length, kissing the hand that slew him, and blessing God, his country, and his father.

Here all my indignation turns into a devout astonishment. I admire the marvellous resources of the human soul, which can fulfil its divine calling in all places, and in spite of the most vicious habits and institutions.—Yet I pause, fearful lest the servility

of the slave may not have followed the martyr in his triumph, even to the gates of heaven.

No! it cannot be: death is not a flatterer, not even in Russia. This example then of supernatural virtue proves to us the beautiful and desirable truth, that the action of the most corrupted society is insufficient to subvert the primitive plans of Providence; and that man, who, according to Plato, is a fallen angel, may always become an exalted saint.

What a tragedy was this! Never has Rome, either Pagan or Christian, produced any thing more noble than these long adieus of the son of Ivan IV. to his father.

If the Russians do not know how to be humane, they know sometimes how to soar above humanity.

Karamsin doubts the sincerity of the grief of the Czar. It is true it lasted only a short time, but I believe it was genuine.

However this may be, it did not soften the character of the monster, who continued to the end of his life to wallow in the filthiest debauch, and to wash himself in innocent blood.

On the approach of death, he caused himself to be carried several times into the apartment where lay his treasures. There he greedily feasted his dulled lack-lustre eyes on the jewels and useless gold which he could not carry with him beyond the grave.

After having lived as a tiger, he died as a satyr, outraging by a revolting act, his daughter-in-law, an angel of virtue and purity, the young and chaste wife of his second son, Fedor, who, after the death of the Czarewitch, had become the heir of the empire. This young lady approached the bed of the dying

man to console him in his last moments, — and was seen to fly, uttering a scream of horror.

Thus died Ivan IV. in the Kremlin; and, though it be difficult to believe, he was long mourned by the nation, the great and the little, the laity and the clergy, as though he had been the best of princes.

These marks of sympathy, whether spontaneous or not, are, it must be owned, any thing but encouraging to virtuous sovereigns. Let us, however, draw this lesson from the history: Unlimited despotism has upon the human mind the effect of an intoxicating drink; the madness of the tyrant is communicable to the slave; and, which is yet more astonishing, the victims become the zealous accomplices of their executioners.

A detailed and veracious history of this country would, perhaps, be one of the most instructive books that could be furnished for human meditation, but it would be impossible to compile. Karamsin attempted the work, and flattered his models, but he stopped before the accession of the Romanows. The faint and abridged sketch that I have traced will suffice to give an idea of the events and the men with whom the mind, in spite of itself, associates the terror-clad walls of the Kremlin.

APPENDIX TO CHAP. XXVI.

The reader will now be able to enter in some measure into the feeling produced by the sight of the great Russian fortress; but a painter alone could impart any definite conception of its form. Art has no name by which to characterise the architecture of this infernal citadel; the style of its palaces, prisons, and churches, have nothing in common with any known order of building. The Kremlin is neither Gothic, classic, moresque, nor yet pure Byzantine: it is neither like the Alhambra, nor the monuments of Egypt, India, China, Greece, or Rome. If the expression may be allowed, it is built in the Czaric style. Ivan is the *ideal* of a tyrant; the Kremlin is the ideal of a tyrant's palace. The Czar is the inhabitant of the Kremlin; the Kremlin is the house of a Czar. I have little taste for newly-coined words, and least of all for those of my own coining: but Czaric architecture is a descriptive term necessary to the traveller; no other could picture what it pictures to the thoughts of those who know practically the meaning of the word *czar*.

Dream on some day, when under the influence of fever, that you tread the abodes of the strange beings that come and go before your eyes, and you may form some idea of this city of the giants, whose edifices thus rise in the midst of a city of men. The Kremlin has been imagined by M. de Lamartine, who, without having seen it, has painted it in his descriptions of the city of the antediluvian giants, in his *Fall of an Angel*, a work that, notwithstanding the rapidity with which it was composed, or perhaps owing to that inspired rapidity, contains beauties of the highest order, and may be designated as poetry in fresco.

The Russians are, of all civilised people, those among whom the sentiment of equity is the most weak and the most vague. Thus, in giving the surname of Terrible to Ivan IV., a title which they had previously accorded as one of eulogy to his grandfather, Ivan III., they have done justice neither to the glorious monarch nor to the tyrant. The following is from Karamsin: —

"It is to be remarked that, in the *memory of the people*, the

brilliant renown of Ivan survived the recollection of his *bad qualities.* The groans had ceased, the victims were reduced to dust; new events caused *ancient traditions* to be forgotten; and the memory of this prince reminded people only of the conquest of three Mogul kingdoms. The proofs of his atrocious actions were buried in the public archives; whilst Kazan, Astrachan, and Siberia remained in the eyes of the nation as imperishable monuments of his glory. The Russians, who saw in him the illustrious author of their power and civilisation, rejected or forgot the surname of tyrant, given him by his contemporaries. Under the influence of some confused recollections of his cruelty, they still call him Ivan the Terrible, but without distinguishing him from his grandfather, to whom ancient Russia had given the same epithet, rather in praise than in reproach. "History does not pardon wicked princes so easily as do people."

Thus are the great prince and the monster together identified under the appellation of Terrible!!—*and this by posterity!* Such is Russian equity; and time is accomplice in the injustice. Lavau, when describing the Kremlin, does not blush to invoke the shade of Ivan IV., whom he dares to compare to David weeping the faults of his youth.

I cannot resist here inserting another extract from Karamsin, illustrative of the character of a prince in whom Russia gloried —Ivan III., grandfather of Ivan IV.

"Without being a tyrant like his grandson, he had received from nature a certain harshness of character, which he knew how to moderate by the strength of his reason. Founders of dynasties are rarely distinguished by the sensibility of their feelings; and the firmness requisite for great political achievements is very nearly allied to stern severity. It is said that a single glance of Ivan's, when he was excited with anger, would make timid women swoon; that petitioners dreaded to approach his throne; and that even at his table, his grandees trembled before him—not daring to utter a single word, or to make the slightest movement, when the monarch, fatigued with conversation, and overcome with wine, fell asleep towards the end of the banquet: all then sat in profound silence, waiting for a *new* command, to divert the Czar, and to enjoy themselves."

It was Ivan III. who was the true founder of the modern

Russian empire; and it was he also who rebuilt, in stone, the walls of the Kremlin.

The portrait of Ivan III., by Karamsin, does not belie the declaration of that great prince: "I will give to Russia whomsoever I please." This was his answer to the boyards when they demanded the crown for his grandson, whom he had dispossessed in favour of the son of a second wife: for, to the present times, legitimacy in Russia has depended on the good pleasure of the Czars.

Peter the Great confirmed this principle of Ivan III., by making, as did that prince, the succession dependant on his caprice. He yet more resembled Ivan IV. by the execution of his son, whose life he destroyed, as well as that of the priests and others who encouraged the young prince in his resistance to the civilisation imported from the West, and enjoined as the most sacred duty by the cruel founder of the new empire of Russia. The following is extracted from M. le Général Comte de Ségur's *History of Russia, and of Peter the Great:*

"It was in 1716 that the Czar thus declared himself beyond and above all laws; as though he was preparing for the terrible *coup-d'état* with which, in 1718, he stained his renown.

* * * * * * *

"In September, 1716, Alexis, to escape from the infant civilisation of the Russians, took refuge in the midst of the civilisation of Europe. He placed himself under the protection of Austria, and lived concealed with a mistress at Naples.

"Peter discovered his retreat, and wrote to him. His letter commenced with reproaches, and concluded by dreadful menaces if he did not obey the orders sent to him. It contained also these words: 'Do you fear me? I assure you, and promise you, in the name of God, and by the final Judgment, that if you submit to my will, and return here, I will not subject you to any punishment; nay, I will love you even more than formerly.'

"On this solemn pledge of a father and a monarch, Alexis returned to Moscow the 3d February, 1718: on the day after, he was disarmed, seized, interrogated, contemptuously excluded from the throne—both he and his posterity—and thrown into a fortress.

"There, every day and night, an absolute father, violating

his sworn faith, together with all the laws of nature, and the laws that he had himself given to his empire, came to torture the timid mind of this unfortunate prince, by a political inquisition equal in insidious atrocity to the inquisition of religion. He tormented him with all the terrors of heaven and of earth, and forced him to denounce his friends and relations, including even his own mother.

"This protracted crime lasted for five months. The two first saw the exile of numerous nobles, the disinherison of a son, the imprisonment of a sister, the disgrace and flagellation of a wife, and the execution of a brother-in-law. Nor was this sufficient. In one single day Gleboff, a Russian general, said to have been the lover of the repudiated Czarina, was impaled in the midst of a scaffold, the four corners of which were graced by the heads of a bishop, a boyard, and two other dignitaries, who, before decapitation, had been broken on the wheel. This horrible scaffold was again surrounded by a circle of stumps of trees, on which more than fifty priests and other citizens had been beheaded. * * * The emperor promenaded coolly in the midst of the scene. It is even said that, instigated by a restless ferocity, he mounted the scaffold to assure himself of the agony of Gleboff; and that the latter, making him a sign to approach, spit in his face. * * *

"Meanwhile the principal victim remained trembling and isolated. Peter caused him to be carried from the prisons of Moscow to those of Petersburg.

"It was there that he continued to torture the mind of his son by extorting from him the smallest recollections of irritation, indocility, and rebellion; congratulating himself at each confession; noting them down day by day with fiendish precision, and labouring upon them, until he thought that, by means of certain constructions, he had succeeded in making out a case of capital crime.

"He then called together his creatures in order to submit to them, as he said, 'the long list of unheard-of crimes of which his son had been guilty against a father and a sovereign. He alone had the right to judge him, nevertheless he sought their aid; *for he feared eternal death, as he had promised his son pardon, and had sworn it to him by the judgment of God.* It was therefore for them to do justice, without consideration of

birth or person, in order that the country might not be wronged.' It is true that he added to this perspicuous and fearful order, the palpably insidious instruction, that the judges were to decide without flattering him or fearing his disgrace, if it was concluded that his son only merited a light punishment.

"The slaves understood their master. * * * The grandees of the state, to the number of one hundred and eighty, obeyed. They pronounced sentence of death unanimously and without hesitation. * * *

"Nothing could deter the emperor from his design, — neither the time that his wrath had had to cool, nor remorse, nor yet the repentance, the submissiveness, and the trembling weakness of the suppliant. Things that appease and disarm even foreign enemies were without effect on the heart of a father. On the contrary, as he had been his son's accuser and judge, so also he resolved to be his executioner. On the 7th July, 1718, the very day following the sentence, he repaired, followed by his nobles, to receive the last tears of his son, and to mingle with them his own; and when at length it was imagined that his heart had melted, he sent for a *strong potion*, which he had previously caused to be prepared. Growing impatient, he hastened its arrival by a second message; he had it presented as a wholesome remedy, and did not retire — profoundly sorrowful, it is true* — until he had poisoned the hapless young man, who still continued to implore his pardon. He then attributed the death of his victim, who expired some hours after in frightful convulsions, to the terror with which the announcement of his sentence had struck him. This gross pretence was the only cover he deemed necessary for the brutal minds of his dependants: but he commended to them silence; which commendation was so well obeyed, that, except for the memoirs of a foreigner, a witness, and even an actor in the horrible drama, history would never have known these fearful and final details."

* To weep over its victim is one of the traits of Russian character. —*Note by the Author of the Travels.*

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